

Thursday August 8 1996

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NEWSPAPER OF THE YEAR 46,626

Ruaridh Nicoll on our new neighbours

Welcome to Mars

G2 with European weather

Jack Nicholson talks to Derek Malcolm

Women, me and movies

Eric Roberts on 7/7

Online

Neville Brody redesigns the Web

G2 pages 10/11

Advisers accused of putting election win in jeopardy with macho image

Short plays Blair's 'dark men'

David Hencke, Westminster Correspondent

CLARE Short, the controversial shadow Cabinet minister, last night accused her leader's advisers of jeopardising Labour's chance of victory at the general election and threatening its existence. She accused them — the "people in the dark" — of trying to portray Tony Blair as an unprincipled "macho man" instead of the "fresh, principled and decent" person who took over from the late John Smith. "If we don't win it will be the end of Labour as a party of power at least for a generation, if not for ever," she said in a highly critical interview with the New Statesman. "I think the obsession with the media and the focus groups is making us look as if we want power at any price and that we don't stand for anything. And the people who think Tony has got to look very strong are making him less attractive than he is. This is a very stupid thing to do."

from her new post as shadow minister for overseas development — comes a day after a Guardian poll showed the Labour lead ebbing away. Although she names no names, her comments are clearly aimed at Mr Blair's inner advisers including Peter Mandelson and Alastair Campbell, who have been accused of briefing against her to journalists. The creation of "focus groups" where selected voters give their opinion to the party has been one of Mr Mandelson's key strategies. In a swipe at their activities she says: "I sometimes call them the people who live in the dark. Everything they do is in hiding." She adds: "These people are making a terrible error. They think that Labour is unselectable, so they want to get something else elected, even though really it is still the Labour Party. This is a dangerous game, which assumes people are stupid. "My life opportunities were brought to me by Labour and what they are now doing is allowing the Tory propaganda version of Labour to be reality. They are saying 'Vote for Tony Blair's New Labour. We all agree the old one was appalling and you all know that most of the people in Labour are really the old ones, but we've got some who are nothing to do with that vote for.' "One, that is a lie. And two, it's dangerous. I think they are profoundly wrong." In an extraordinary passage, Ms Short describes

Tony Blair as two people — one an authentic likeable figure, the other a Frankenstein creation of the "people in the dark". "Tony and I had a get together last night. I had a talk with nice Tony Blair. I really like that one. I think that's the real one." Of the other Tony Blair, the macho figure, she says: "I think he comes out in the dark." She also expresses alarm at the way the shadow cabinet conducts business in private, accusing some colleagues of stabbing her in the back. "I've had this experience of some people who are meant to be on my side, one of whom I thought was a really good friend of mine being dishonest and trying to hurt and damage me. It's very upsetting because if you don't expect it, it's shocking." She says shadow cabinet meetings fail to bring out the best in people. "We sit at a long, thin table and there's no eye contact. It's all very boysy. If anyone makes a silly joke, everyone laughs." Ms Short's outburst at the spin doctors reflects the private views of other shadow cabinet members, some of whom are unhappy at the way Mr Blair's advisers appear to be calling the shots. Others have told the Guardian privately they feel isolated and are angry that some key decisions appear to be announced to the newspapers rather than the shadow cabinet.



Clare Short, who says Tony Blair's advisers are making the Labour Party look as if it does not stand for anything

Short shrift

'If we don't win, it will be the end of Labour as a party of power at least for a generation, if not for ever'

'I think the obsession with the media and the focus groups is making us look as if we want power at any price'

'Blair came along as a fresh, young, principled and decent man and some people are trying to turn him into macho man, not seeming decent and principled'

'Tony and I had a get-together. I had a talk with nice Tony Blair. I really like that one. I think that's the real one.' Of the other Tony Blair, the macho figure: 'I think he comes out in the dark'

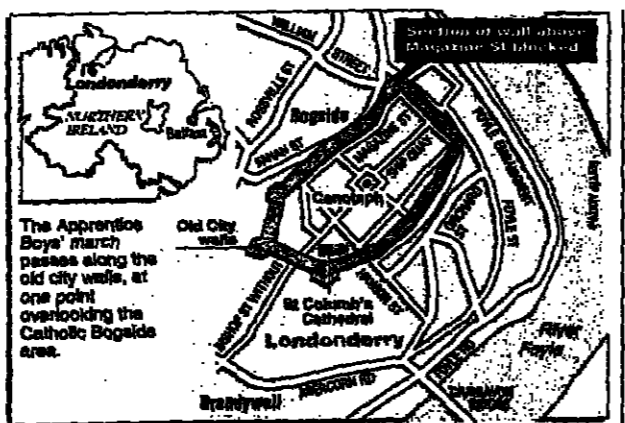
'I've had this experience of people who are meant to be on my side, one of whom I thought was a really good friend, being dishonest and trying to hurt and damage me.'

Town walls shut to stop marchers

Mayhew public order move angers defiant Apprentice Boys

David Shearlock, Ireland Correspondent

TENSION was rising across Northern Ireland last night as Unionists reacted furiously to a lightning security force operation to seal off a section of Londonderry's historic walls in response to the Northern Ireland Secretary Sir Patrick Mayhew's decision to re-route the Protestant Apprentice Boys' parade this weekend. Scores of troops and police, with lorries carrying breeze blocks, razor wire and scaffolding, moved into the quarter-mile section of Londonderry's walls overlooking the nationalist Bogside district. It was there that the Troubles erupted in 1969 over a similar dispute involving an Apprentice Boys' parade in the mainly Catholic city. As the security operation got under way, Sir Patrick Mayhew, the Northern Ireland Secretary, was explaining why he was using his 1987 Public Order powers to ban all parades from the walls



until the end of August, whereas responsibility for a controversial Orange parade at Drumcree last month was left to the RUC chief constable, Sir Hugh Amessley. Sir Patrick said the decision was taken to help the RUC to preserve public order and protect the community. "There was real and serious anxiety if this order was not made. I have made it reluctantly but if there is agreement before Saturday, the order will be rescinded. This prohibition has been made in the light of the chief constable's advice that it is likely undue demands will otherwise be made on police and military forces."

Sir Hugh denied that Sir Patrick's effective U-turn had anything to do with the disastrous outcome of events at Drumcree. "The situation is entirely different; there is no issue of carrying cans. The Secretary of State has wider powers, he can deal with the resources. I would have had to have some thing like 300 officers on a 24-hour basis covering that wall. "By using 'undue demands' on the security forces within that time we're able to avoid that. That seems to me a pragmatic approach to a situation which could get very serious indeed," he said. The Democratic Unionist spokesman for Londonderry,

Gregory Campbell, was outraged by the decision: "If people expect us simply meekly to accept that, to lie down and walk away, then I'm afraid that's not going to happen."

Chris McGimpsey, a senior Ulster Unionist and Apprentice Boys' spokesman, said: "Unionist people are saying to themselves: 'The very core of our cultural and political identity is being denied us.' "We're dealing with an attempt to undermine the British ethos in Northern Ireland." But John Hume, leader of the Social Democratic and Labour Party, said he would continue to seek agreement between the two sides before Saturday's parade. He has chaired four meetings between the Apprentice Boys and Bogside residents, but the talks broke down on Tuesday over nationalist demands that any agreement had to apply to marches throughout Northern Ireland and not just in Londonderry. Mr Hume said: "I regret very much that we didn't reach agreement. Any decision of this nature obviously causes tension and I hope, given that we still have a gap between now and Saturday, that we still can reach agreement."

'Maybe we're all Martians, now'

North Walker in Washington

THEIR awe tinged with scientific caution, a panel of American scientists formally declared their belief yesterday that they had found "evidence of past life on Mars", and immediately invited colleagues around the world to prove them wrong. President Bill Clinton simultaneously announced "a space summit" in which the next steps of the United States space programme and Mars exploration would be debated by politicians. The US scientists' conclusions are based on two and a half years of research on a meteorite, found in 1984 in Antarctica, which they believe was catapulted off Mars 16 million years ago. Research teams at Manchester University and the Open University at Milton Keynes are also studying fragments of the rock. By coincidence, two Nasa probes are about to leave for Mars in the launch window that comes every two years, when Earth and the red planet are aligned. The Mars Global Surveyor, to



be launched in November, will map the planet. In December, the Mars Pathfinder will be launched as part of the Mars Environmental Survey and will take photographs and conduct chemical tests. For one of the most profound moments in history, this first real evidence that we may not be alone in the universe. Turn to page 3, column 1

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Inside

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Sketch

Graying shades of red and white



James Meek

IT HAD been a week of bad omens for Russia's communists: not only had a small boy been killed in eastern Siberia by a toppling statue of Lenin, but Pravda had gone tabloid. So supporters might have been permitted to feel a certain apprehension as they held the founding congress of the Popular-Patriotic Union of Russia with their nationalist allies in central Moscow. But there was little sign of anything untoward as the delegates' old heads bobbed over their little jotters as they noted down the rhetoric from the platform in the Cyrillic alphabet. Apart from the wrinkles and grey hairs, it could have been a school dictation class. Sorry, no dictators here. You'll find the dictators — or "democrats", as the communist-nationalist opposition disparagingly calls Boris Yeltsin's supporters — up the road in the Kremlin. The forces which robbed Gennady Zyuganov's communist-nationalist alliance of election victory were not just dishonest media manipulators, but enemies of Russia, traitors, agents of the West. But when one speaker said they were the real heirs of the Bolsheviks, the tensions inherent in the alliance became evident. Moments later one woman won wild applause when she declared that in her district — "the reddest district of all" — people looked on those who had not voted communist as if they were carriers of cholera. After Mr Yeltsin's campaign to demonise the communists, the demonisation of the democrats — and by extension the portraits — of the 40 million people who had voted for Mr Yeltsin as gullible fools — had a soothing effect on delegates in the small, anonymous rented hall. Flags or symbols of any kind

were strangely absent. Even the congress voting cards had been blanched from red to white. But the earnest, complacent atmosphere changed when the brooding figure of the author Stanislav Govoryukhin began to speak. Admired for his searing portrait of Russia's spiritual decay, We Cannot Live Like This, he is not a communist but supported Mr Zyuganov during the elections. After a few minutes, some of the dutiful note-takers slowed down. They looked at what they had written and frowned. Mr Govoryukhin had found another enemy and the enemy seemed to be, well, people like them. "Orthodox communists," he was calling them. What was all this about millions of Russian soldiers being thrown into Hitler's hands by Stalin during the war, what was all this about Afghanistan? What was all this about the communists blowing up churches? He seemed to be suggesting the communists had a few things to apologise for before they could move forward. This sounded like dirty democrat talk. Victor Anpilov, a radical communist leader in the audience, began growling and shouting. Another delegate, a solid individual with Leonid Brezhnev eyebrows and wearing a red badge, mustered himself to heckle Mr Govoryukhin. But what was the worst insult he could fling at a fellow Popular-Patriot, if a democrat was the devil incarnate? "Individualist!" he shouted. It fell to Mr Zyuganov, warmly received and later elected leader of the new movement, to smooth over the discord by the tried and trusted method of reading a stodgy speech filled with esoteric statistics — such as the number of extra Russians who would have been born if there had been no wars or crises during the twentieth century. But Mr Zyuganov did not criticise Mr Govoryukhin, and the rhythm of the dutiful note-takers had already been broken, perhaps, by the voice of dissent. Individualists!

Russians battle to retake Gromyko, page 6; Leader comment, page 8

Ministers' failure to produce costings on looking after elderly 'like asking taxpayer to sign blank cheque'

MPs damn care proposals

David Brindle, Social Services Correspondent

ATTEMPTS by ministers to defuse controversy over payment for long-term care of elderly people were yesterday humiliated by a Conservative-dominated committee of MPs. The Commons health select committee said the Government's proposals for partnership schemes, whereby the state would match any private insurance cover for long-term care, would be "at best a useful part" of a broader package that required further thought. In scathing comments about ministers' presentation of the consultative proposals, launched with a fanfare in a green paper in May, the committee said: "We deplore the Government's failure to provide even rough-and-ready costings of its various options. Until such costings are provided, the taxpayer is in effect being invited to sign a blank cheque." The proposals are designed to enable people to avoid having to sell their homes to pay for long-term care by offering protection of assets in return for purchase of private insurance. A person who bought £40,000 insurance cover would get up to £60,000 protection on top of the £16,000 maximum available now. The committee says in a report that while such schemes may benefit some people, it is impossible to make any proper judgment because of the Government's refusal to provide costings — even when asked by the committee to do so. "For the foreseeable future, many people will either be too poor to be able to afford such schemes, or too lacking in assets to need them," the report states. "We would be worried by any suggestion that partnership schemes are 'the answer' to the problems of long-term care funding." The MPs are even more damning of the Government's other main idea, that people should be allowed to opt for a smaller initial occupational pension on retirement in return for a larger sum later which would be used to fund any long-term care. The report says the idea "does not offer a convincing solution to the problem of fully funding long-term care, at any rate for other than a minority of rich people". It calls for pensions to be kept separate from any mechanism for meeting care costs. Although the committee acknowledges a widespread perception that arrangements for long-term care funding are unfair — not least because people do not see their home as an asset in the same sense as savings — it says that reports of a crisis in paying for such care are "unfounded or 'downright alarmist'". Britain does not face as



Looking for security in old age... but the select committee was unimpressed by government solutions. PHOTOGRAPH: DAVID SILLITOE

Main points

- Britain does not face elderly care crisis
Long-term care funding is widely perceived as unfair
Government plans for partnership insurance not the answer
Private insurance market must be regulated
NHS payment of nursing element of nursing home fees should be considered
Ministers wrong to reject national eligibility criteria for NHS services

'For the foreseeable future, many people will be too poor to afford partnership schemes, or too lacking in assets to need them. We would be worried by any suggestion that they are the answer to the problems of long-term care funding'

Review

Whodunnit? Who cares!

Stuart Jeffries

MURDER ONE BBC2 IT WASN'T either of the bald guys. It wasn't Neil Avedon, though he was caught on video tying Jessica up in some sicko bondage blah. It wasn't Hoffman's schizo missus. It wasn't Jessica's sister, whose breasts were lovingly shot in profile for so much of the last episode (though she was clearly being set up for something). No, it was Roberto Portalegre. He did it. As if we cared. Murder One kept its disappointing culprit under wraps until Chapter 21 of this 23-part series. Avedon was sentenced two episodes before closing time — so he was clearly innocent and likely to be free to be rich and obnoxious once again before the final credits rolled. And when it was revealed shortly after Avedon's sentence that a convicted rapist-coke dealer—all-round bad guy had received a parking ticket outside Jessica's apartment on the night of the murder, it was clear that Stephen Bochco and his chums were going to deal one from the bottom of the deck. It's the cheapest thing a thriller can do: introduce a character with fresh legs in the final furlong, and watch the favourites fade away. But, then, who did it was not that important. This simulacrum of justice had become much less diverting than the soap opera towards the end. More interesting was the legal procedural and the spectacle of Richard Cross, dying of Aids but pumped up with

drugs to give crucial testimony before he croaked. More interesting, too, was the late disclosure of the murderer — Cross, when he found he was HIV-positive, cultivated a safe-sex passion for watching Jessica having sex with other men and so installed a VCR in her bedroom. It was a wonder that the sex wasn't written for the screen by Michael Crichton, such was Murder One's passé marriage of video technology and voyeurism. Hoffman's wife, too, could have come from a Crichton novel, given that she had one less dimension than any plausible woman. In early instalments, her role was to present Ted with a well-earned glass of red when he returned from work. Then she mutated into Ms Feisty, with a ball-buster of a divorce lawyer who was going to make Hoffman cry for mercy before she got through with his stock portfolio. By the end, with Hoffman exonerated and justice served California-style, his wife had reverted to type. She was there for him. In a caring, on-off, emotional, sexual, if not maker-dinner-while-you-have-a-well-earned-Martini kind of way. If anyone uses the words "character development" about Mrs Hoffman, feel free to laugh loud and hard into their faces. It isn't over, though. Portalegre may be awaiting the chair in San Quentin. But his offer to Hoffman is still on the table: \$20 million to represent him at appeal. "And what makes you think I'll take it?" Hoffman snarled. Why, the sequel, you putz! After all, who could resist Murder Two: The Nightmare Continues?

Action marks move beyond 'single issue' campaigning

YESTERDAY'S support for Tube workers is an example of how action campaigners are moving beyond single issues, writes Alex Bellis. Under the umbrella Critical Mass, cyclists have been taking part in demonstrations in more than 30 towns and cities in Britain since 1984. Yesterday was the first time Critical Mass has mobilised support for another cause.

This cross-fertilisation can be seen across the protest movement. The landscape is one of overlapping "disorganisations". The campaign against the Newbury bypass, entering its second phase this week, is in contact with Corporate Watch, a new organisation based in Oxford that advises on how to campaign against large companies.

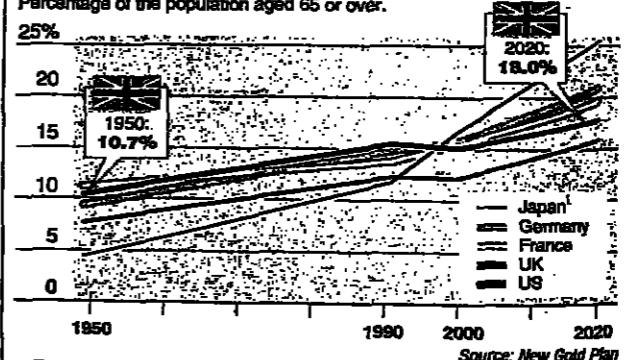
step an increase in numbers of elderly people as do many other countries. Moreover, the projected increase over the next 25 years in numbers of over-85s is smaller than the rise between 1971 and 1994. While there are problems in meeting care costs, the report says, such problems are "more manageable than many recent commentators have suggested" and it may be "both possible and affordable" to continue with the system as it exists. If change is considered, however, one option backed by the committee would be development of flexible equity-release

schemes enabling people to use the value of their homes to pay for care while keeping them until they die. In a statement on the report, Stephen Dorrell, Health Secretary, made no comment on the criticisms of the green paper proposals. However, the minister indicated that the Government would accept a call by the committee for long-term care insurance to be regulated under the Financial Services Act 1986. He said a consultation document on this would appear in the autumn. The committee's report received a mixed reaction.

Tessa Jowell, Labour shadow health minister, welcomed his call for a rethink of government proposals, saying: "The Tories have cynically whipped up fears about a 'demographic timebomb' to justify their plans to pass the costs of long-term care from the state to the individual." Maryyn Kohler, Help the Aged's head of public affairs, said: "We need a clear agenda so that people can plan for the future. This report is not setting that agenda."

Long-term Care: Future Provision and Funding; HMSO; £11.50

Ageing population



Thumb holds clue to 'missing Picasso' sketch

Dan Glaister Arts Correspondent

THE old adage about not throwing away that old rag in the attic until it's been checked by Hugh Scully was given a new lease of life yesterday when it emerged that a drawing found in a flat in Ealing might be a missing work by Picasso. Authentication of the work may rest on identifying a thumbprint at the bottom of the picture. A fingerprint expert with Cambridgeshire police has offered to help solve the mystery. The picture turned up when a Brighton antique dealer bought the contents of a flat in Ealing, west London, belonging to a Polish woman who claimed to be the illegitimate daughter of Picasso. The dealer called in art historian Mark Harris to inspect the ink and gouache. "When I saw it I got the very strong impression that it could be a Picasso," said Mr Harris. "It's strikingly similar to the Three Dancers in the Fate." The sketch, according to Mr Harris, shows Picasso



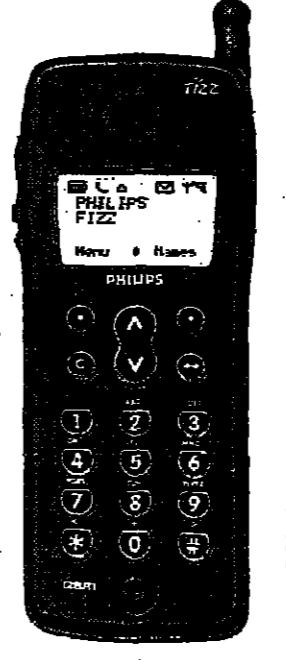
Detail from the sketch said to bear similarities to Guernica

of France, Picasso filled in an application for a work permit which included both thumbprints. The original is held in an archive in Paris. "We're very keen to get it," said Mr Harris, "but we've only got a photocopy. It's just a case of fighting on." Frustrated, Mr Harris issued an appeal on the Internet entitled Picasso's Unknown Masterpiece. Martin Leadbetter, a fingerprint expert who helped to authenticate a Turner painting last year and now works for Cambridgeshire police, heard about the Internet appeal and offered to assist Mr Harris. Mr Leadbetter said of the picture: "It's pretty awful. I wouldn't even give £25 for it. Unless it's authenticated."

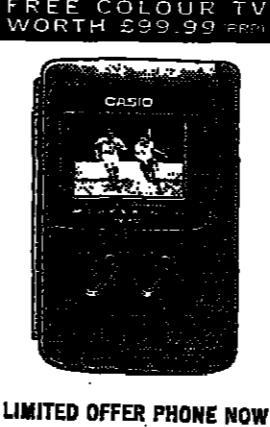
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Bank call for rate rise dents Tories

Richard Thomas
Economics Correspondent

TORY hopes of stoking up the economy before the next general election suffered a setback yesterday when the Bank of England called for a rise in interest rates to keep the lid on inflation. In its sharpest warning to date, the Bank said a failure by the Chancellor, Kenneth Clarke, to act quickly could mean more drastic rate increases later.

Chief economist Mervyn King, unveiling the Bank's latest quarterly Inflation Report, called for a pre-emptive strike against the risk of higher inflation. "The question on the table now is when to tighten monetary policy. It has to be tightened. And there is certainly a case to be made for increasing rates sooner rather than later."

The Bank's gloomy message came the day after news that a reviving economy — combined with the lowest mortgage rates for 30 years — had helped to trim Labour's opinion poll lead over the Conservatives to 13 points, against 21 points in the spring. With the scope for tax cuts limited by the poor state of the public finances, Mr Clarke is under growing political pressure to use cheaper money to fuel a short-term burst of consumer confidence. But the Bank urged Mr Clarke to resist the temptation to lower rates again, adding that "nothing has happened... to change our mind" since the Bank opposed June's quarter-point

cut to 5.75 per cent. It warned that the Government was likely to miss its 2.5 per cent target for underlying inflation two years' rise now.

Treasury ministers put on a brave face, stressing commitment to low inflation. Michael Jack, Financial Secretary to the Treasury, said: "The Chancellor has always made it very clear that having got down to low levels of inflation, he is not going to give up that prize easily."

"He has made it very clear that maintaining low inflation is the guiding light of his interest rate policy. And he has never been fearful of changing interest rates if he has to... I don't think there is any disagreement between the Governor and the Chancellor."

But most City analysts said the Bank had successfully reduced Mr Clarke's room for manoeuvre and Opposition parties seized on the report to attack Mr Clarke's handling of the economy.

Liberal Democrat treasury spokesman Malcolm Bruce said: "Today's report confirms that the Chancellor is putting the political interests of the Conservative Party before the long term economic interests of the country."

Shadow chancellor Gordon Brown said: "If interest rates are to be kept down the Government must tackle the imbalance between consumption and investment in the economy and the investment gap with our competitors — both of which have derailed previous recoveries and threaten to derail this one."

Wise words

May 14: Bank of England: "March's base rate cut can be justified as an 'insurance policy' against a downturn in the economy. There is a case for continuing to pay the premium for a short period. But it is not easy to see a case for increasing the premium."

June 6: base rates cut to 5.75%.

February 14: Bank admits it gave the wrong advice over January's cut, but denied that this gave Chancellor Kenneth Clarke the go ahead for another reduction.

March 8: base rates cut to 6%.

January 17: Bank governor Eddie George says he would prefer not to cut interest rates. He is "inclined to wait".

January 18: base rates cut to 6.25%.

December 13: Eddie George warns Mr Clarke that a cut "would not be without its dangers".

December 13: base rates cut from 6.75% to 6.5%.



The Pleine-Fougères youth hostel where Caroline Dickinson was killed, with the coach which brought the party from Launceston College still parked outside. PHOTOGRAPH: P FRANK

Murder hunt in disarray

French police release suspect

Alex Duval Smith
in Pleine-Fougères

THE inquiry into the rape and murder of 13-year-old Caroline Dickinson at a youth hostel in Brittany appeared to have descended into chaos and rumour after French police last night released their prime suspect less than three weeks after his arrest. As a vagrant, Patrice Padé, walked free from a jail in southern Brittany yesterday it emerged that police investigating Caroline's death on July 18 had failed to follow up several leads, including an indecent assault in the area just two days earlier. The death of the Cornish teenager, who was in a party of 39 pupils and five adults from Launceston College, was particularly mysterious because she was apparently raped and suffocated while four of her friends slept in the same room. As police and the investigating magistrate continued to stay silent, insisting that Mr Padé, aged 39, remained under

investigation, it emerged that in the last two years Pleine-Fougères and the surrounding area had been the scene of another sex murder. Local gendarmes, sidelined in the inquiry, confirmed that two days before Caroline's murder a 26-year-old German woman was indecently assaulted in a nearby village. On the eve of the British girl's death, a woman in another village, Coesnon, fought off an attacker whom she described as blond and wearing a black jacket. Local people speculated that Caroline's killer was the same man who, on July 22, raped and murdered an 11-year-old French girl in nearby Redon. Others continued to believe in Mr Padé's guilt, saying he may have had an accomplice. Like Mr Padé, the man arrested and placed under formal investigation for the Redon killing had a record of previous sex offences and confessed. Unlike Mr Padé, whose semen, it was revealed on Tuesday, did not match that found on Caroline — the results of the DNA tests carried out on the body of the 11-



Suspect Patrice Padé, released as a result of DNA test

year-old have not yet been released. René Blanchard, Mr Padé's lawyer, yesterday criticised the tactics police used to extract his client's confession. "They held him in isolation for 45 hours before he confessed," said Mr Blanchard. "I can easily imagine Mr Padé weakening, or talking a lot of rubbish which could be taken to be a confession." Despite the possibility of a rapist and killer remaining on the loose in the holiday area, there were no signs of increased security at the Pleine-Fougères youth hostel. Caroline's killer is believed

to have entered the locked three-storey building through a ground floor window between midnight and 3am. Yesterday, while the door of Room 4 where her body was found remained boarded over and the window-shutters closed, it was possible to wander freely in the building. The 32 teenagers from a town near Cologne, could come and go as they pleased. One said: "The front and back doors are supposed to be locked at 11pm, but we have been able to go out until midnight." The hostel's manager, Louis Thébaud, had gone on

holiday and his deputy, Grégoire Cholot, was "out all day" according to the only member of staff, a kitchen supervisor. The size of the rooms on either side of that in which Caroline's body was found make it difficult to imagine how the teenager could have been raped and murdered while her friends slept. Caroline had slept on a mattress which could have covered the entire floor space between two metal-framed bunk beds. Police would not comment on the possibility that she may have been attacked during a visit to the lavatory just down the hallway from her room, or that she went outside to see the man or men who later killed her. On Tuesday police had said the accompanying two male teachers from Launceston College, the coach driver and five boys in the group had been eliminated from the in-

quiry after DNA tests. But they refused to confirm this yesterday. Some of the village's 1,500 inhabitants argued that they had never been convinced of Mr Padé's guilt. "It was all too easy," said an elderly farmer. A waitress at the Olympique café said: "I had stopped worrying. I had told myself it was him [Mr Padé]. Now it's back to staying indoors." The police inspector leading the inquiry at Rennes, René Comère, refused to answer questions, pointing to orders from the investigating magistrate in St Malo, Gérard Zaug. Mr Zaug was yesterday refusing to take calls according to a classic French formula, the "secret d'instruction" which allows magistrates complete secrecy. A police source said: "The secrecy in this case is to do with the fact that the victim is foreign. The murder is almost seen as a diplomatic incident."

The victims: Britons murdered in France

- 1977 The Brodericks, shot near St Tropez. Unsolved
- 1978 Robert Hicks, stabbed in Cateoup les Vignes. Unsolved
- 1978 Carol Reeves, battered in St Tropez. Unsolved
- 1978 The Mosses, shot in Cannes. Unsolved
- 1978 John Calmann, stabbed while hiking in Normandy. Unsolved
- 1980 Michael Dins, strangled on Marseilles train. Unsolved
- 1983 John Gramham, suspicious drowning in Seine. Unsolved
- 1983 Niall Campbell, suspicious drowning off Brest. Unsolved
- 1984 Samantha Ward, killed picking flowers in Angers. Unsolved
- 1986 Kenneth Marston, shot by terrorists in Lyon. Unsolved
- 1986 Paul Bellion and Lorraine Glasby, bound and shot in Brittany. Unsolved
- 1989 Fiona Jones, stabbed in Compiègne. Unsolved
- Frederic Blancke sentenced to 15 years
- 1990 Alison Dutton, stabbed 17 times in Cherbourg. Unsolved
- 1990 Joanna Parrish, sexually assaulted, strangled and dumped in Yonne river. Unsolved
- 1991 Leslie and Bernadette Chorlton, strangled in forest. Unsolved
- 1992 Malcolm Olson, strangled in Paris hotel. Unsolved
- 1993 Anthony Howe, found dead on Paris building site. Unsolved
- 1993 James Tolley, drugged and dumped in river. Two women charged.
- 1994 Patricia Green, shot in home near Cannes. Unsolved

'Who's to say we're not all Martians, that life started there'

continued from page 1
universe was a curiously low-key event, as scientists gave detailed accounts of molecular chemistry and laser-induced ion maps. "We conclude that, taken together, this is evidence for early life on Mars," said David McKay, of the Johnson Space Centre. "We have no confirming evidence. We don't have the chemistry. We don't know if they have cell walls or not. We have lines of evidence — none of them conclusive." Scientists came to Washington from US universities and government and private laboratories for the announcement. At the heart of it all squatted a potato-sized chunk of rock, sliced cleanly on one side where the scientists had taken their samples. At least 3.5 billion years old, it had been hewn from the surface of Mars by a meteorite strike, then tumbled through space for 15 million years before finally landing in Antarctica about 16,000 years ago. The rock was found just in time for the latest in mass spectrometers and electron microscopes to discern fossils of bacteria. For the scientists, it was a moment of wonder. "Who is to say that we are not all Martians, that Mars was where life first started?" said Professor Richard Zare of Stanford University, who devised the new instruments. Dr. McKay said "Wherever we look on Earth where we find chemicals and we find water, we find life. Why wouldn't it have evolved also in other places in the solar system? We are just beginning to detect planets around other stars, so why wouldn't life have evolved there too?" The historic press conference took place in the lecture room of the National Aeronautics and Space Administration. Already this year, the Nasa chamber had seen evidence that man can now peer to the farthest reaches of the universe, and that planets had been seen circling other stars. But this latest discovery was expressed in the most prosaic terms. "We believe that the samples of magnetite we have found were produced by bacteria, based on their distinctive shape, on their chemistry, and on their environment," said Dr. Kathy Thomas-Keptra, of Lockheed. Yesterday's panel included a septic Professor Bill Schopf of UCLA, who insisted "extraordinary discoveries require extraordinary proof, and I think more work needs to be done". President Clinton said: "It is another vindication of America's space programme. The implications are as far-reaching and as awe-inspiring as can be imagined."

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"He raised some very difficult issues which face specialists in foetal medicine. Doctors like myself and Phil are daily tortured by them. Where is technology leading us? What is the responsibility of doctors? What is the responsibility of society?"
Professor Kyprianos Nicolaidis on his friend Phillip Bennett

News in brief

Scratchcard spending defended

CLAIMS of excessive spending on National Lottery scratchcards were dismissed yesterday by Peter Davis, the director general of the National Lottery. About £18 million a week is spent on scratchcards, according to the latest research commissioned by the Office of the National Lottery (ONL).

Two thirds of all adults participate, according to the survey carried out by National Opinion Polls (NOP). Only 15 of the 13,000 people surveyed reported spending more than £10 in the previous week.

Peter Davis, director general of the National Lottery, said: "The information we have does not suggest a problem with excessive participation. Most players buy around three scratchcards per week... They represent no more than an opportunity to buy a little entertainment with some loose change." Fifteen per cent of the adult population bought scratchcards each week, compared with a peak of 20 per cent last summer. — Andrew Cuff

Two die in factory fire

TWO men were killed when an explosion and fire destroyed the Scottish Adhesives factory in the Possil district of Glasgow yesterday. Staff battled to save John Burke, aged 38, and James Brown, 35, both from Glasgow, who were trapped in the two-storey building, but they were beaten back by flames.

Firefighters wearing breathing apparatus took more than four hours to control the blaze, which broke out shortly before 10am. More than 200 people were evacuated from buildings around the factory because of the risk from toxic fumes.

The two victims were trapped behind a door by heat and smoke. One fireman said the door was blocked off and had to be broken down to get to them. Health and Safety officials and fire officers have begun an investigation. — John Arledge

Spending cuts 'delay police'

THE chief constable of South Yorkshire acknowledged yesterday that long police delays in attending incidents were no longer unusual because of the corrosive effect of financial cuts. Richard Wells said forces throughout the country were "feeling over-run" and support staff and frontline officers shared a sense of despair at the situation.

Presenting his annual report to the Home Secretary, Michael Howard, Mr Wells said new revenue funding had allowed him to recruit more officers, but capital budget cuts would make supporting the new staff very difficult. — Martin Wainwright

Palace reopens to public



THE most prestigious souvenir shop in London, with palace attached, opens to the public again today. For the fourth year Buckingham Palace throws open its doors to anyone with £8.50 and the stamina for a long queue in Green Park.

More than 1.2 million people have visited the palace since the first summer opening in 1993. Up to 3,000 visitors a day will be admitted until September 30, and this year visitors will be able to buy tickets up to five days in advance.

The souvenir shop has been a huge success. This year its collection ranges from a £2 bar of chocolate to an enamel tin of biscuits. An extract from Mozart's Marriage of Figaro and costs £45. — Maeve Kennedy

Holiday hotels 'death traps'

TOUR operators are sending holidaymakers to foreign hotels that are potential death traps, the Consumers' Association claimed yesterday. Only one hotel of 39 inspected in popular holiday resorts was judged to be satisfactory overall, according to the CA's Holiday Which? magazine.

Serious safety flaws were found in swimming pools, fire precautions, children's play areas, lifts and balconies in Turkey and Gran Canaria, two favourite destinations for Britons, said the magazine.

Several hotels failed their own country's safety standards — destroying the UK tour operators' argument that hotels they use pass local standards.

"Our experts were dismayed by the haphazard attitude to safety. There is no excuse for this appalling record," said Patricia Yates, editor of Holiday Which?, which carried out the survey in June and July.

Keith Betton, of the Association of British Travel Agents, said: "We are surprised to see these results, bearing in mind the fact that tour operators spend millions of pounds in safety inspections. These allegations will be fully investigated. If the claims are true, the problems will be rectified."

Embarrassment for duchess

THE Duchess of York faced fresh embarrassment last night as a former close friend signed a book deal to tell of her relationship with John Bryan, Allan Starlike, Bryan's former business partner, has sold the manuscript of Fergie: Her Secret Life to the publishers of Andrew Morton's Diana: Her True Story.

Publisher Michael O'Mara told PA News: "Allan Starlike's book is an explosive account of every element of the relationship between the duchess and John Bryan."

"I was shocked when I read it. I don't think it embarrasses the royal family, but I would say it will cause the duchess some concern." The duchess, who was preparing for her daughter Beatrice's eighth birthday party, would not comment.

Mr O'Mara said: "The book is not yet finished, but it is extraordinarily frank and shocking. Dr Starlike's documentation is impressive and backs up his story to the fullest extent. I expect his book to be a worldwide bestseller."

Manchester faces huge bomb blast deficit

Peter Hetherington and David Ward

MANCHESTER is facing a multi-million-pound shortfall over the costs of the IRA explosion which devastated the heart of the city eight weeks ago.

As the repair and rebuilding bill rises towards £1 billion, it is clear that the Government will have to find a new funding mechanism to deal with the consequences of the worst bombing of a British city since the war.

The council's labour leadership is preparing for hard bargaining with ministers in the autumn when the full scale of the rebuilding will be clearer.

Richard Leese, council leader, said: "We are not interested in playing political games. We have a bombed out city centre; they have the money." Architects are to be chosen from a government-funded international competition, itself costing at several million pounds.

While the council is looking for help to meet short-term extra costs put at "between three and four million pounds" — mainly on highway repairs and additional building control safety work — extra government aid running into tens of millions will be necessary.

The £20 million European aid offered by the Deputy Prime Minister, Michael Heseltine, is regarded as a small first instalment, although an equal amount will have to come from either business, the council or government agencies before the cash is paid.

Julian Hulse, chief executive of Manchester's chamber of trade and industry supports Mr Leese's pragmatic approach, based in part on success in attracting partnership funding for such projects as the Metrolink tram system, a 19,000-seat arena and a new concert hall. "If we were to say to the Government right now that we need another £100 million, it would be empty gesturing. We don't want to do that," said Mr Hulse.

But representatives of small traders are more critical. Steve Ellison, vice-chairman of the tenants' association at the Corn Exchange, whose columns moved four inches in the bomb blast, said that £3.2 million of a £3.4 million package announced by John Major during a visit to Manchester last week was lottery money already promised

to the Royal Exchange theatre company.

"The Government was making political capital because the theatre money was not connected with the bomb," he said. "It was not new money."

Officials believe around £100 million will be needed to help rebuilding. The money is likely to be borrowed by the council which would then expect compensation from Whitehall through the annual revenue support grant.

There is likely to be a disparity between government aid to Manchester and parts of Northern Ireland.

Under a criminal damage compensation scheme, rebuilding costs and loss of trade are met by a special compensation agency in Belfast which last year paid almost £20 million. Officials' estimates for this year are put

"We are not interested in playing political games. We have a bombed out city"

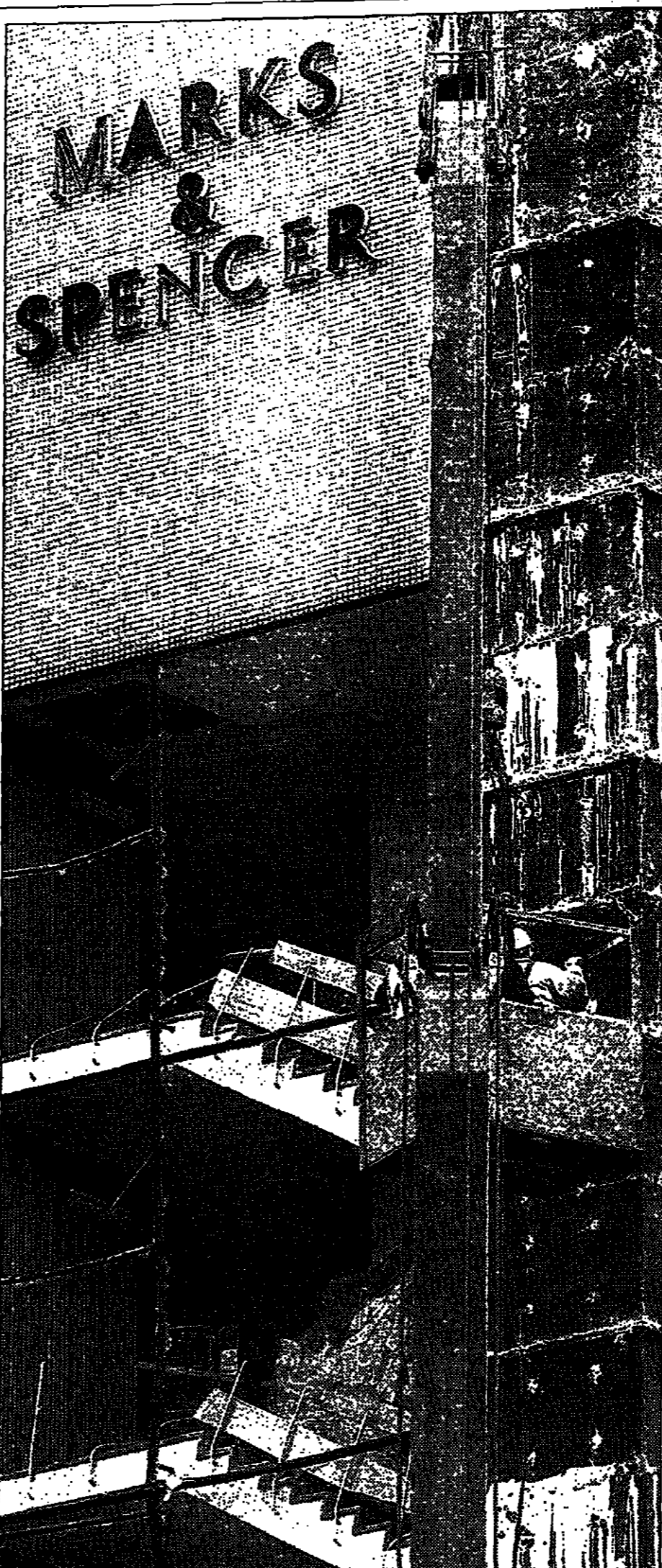
at just over £32 million. A senior council official said: "Everyone knows that none of the funding regimes in Whitehall take into account a bomb going off in the middle of an English city."

While the Government stresses that comparisons are invidious mainly because of the difficulty in getting insurance in Northern Ireland — small traders in Manchester have not taken kindly to the Government's refusal to mount a rescue package. Many are under-insured.

Mr Heseltine says the Government cannot afford to give ground on this front. Many businesses have now been relocated. Of the 674 displaced on July 1, the council now estimates that 250 have to be found new accommodation although 100 have now agreed relocation packages elsewhere in the city centre. The council hopes that most of the 150 remaining will be trading by the end of September.

Mr Leese's vision for the city includes fewer cars, more shops and homes, and an opening up of the cityscape.

But the shattered Arndale Centre, a building for which few Mancunians shed a tear, will not come down. "Even if I had the choice, I would not knock it down. The problem is that it works and that lots of shoppers use it."



After the blast... Repair bill is now edging towards £1 billion PHOTOGRAPH: DON MEEPEE

How to look cod rather than dappy

Vivek Chaudhary on trends in slang

EVER been asked for a bit of shrapnel by a dappy anorak with a rooka who has just been for a blat? Confused? Well, you won't be for much longer, thanks to the Oxford Dictionary.

It plans to shed a bit of light on the mysterious language of the younger generation by including examples of the latest street slang in its forthcoming edition.

The list of words was compiled following a survey of 600 secondary school pupils by Dillons bookshops and Oxford Dictionaries.

It shows, among other things, that pants is creeping in as a swear word and stonking is commonly used as a substitute for excellent. Shrapnel is used to describe loose change, pukka is cool and stylish, while a rooka is a spot of pus.

If you have just been for a blat, that's a short bike ride; if you want some chuddle, it means chewing gum. A dappy is a thick, sad person, while an anorak means someone who is hard working and untrendy.

Mind you, there's no chance of being called that if you've got a bif (cigarette) in your mouth and you are looking decidedly cod (great or good). Rooked means horrible looking and tripped is someone who makes no sense.

Michael Proffitt, from Oxford Dictionaries, said that most of the words discovered in the survey would be considered for inclusion.

"It is impossible to tell which words will last, and which will fade. But it is in the nature of fashion that what is indispensable one year may be rejected the next."

The survey also shows that there are regional variations in use of slang. Boyf, meaning boyfriend, is considered unusual in Peterborough and Lancashire but is acceptable in other parts of the country. A wuss, meaning wimp, is out of fashion in Ipswich but is still commonly used in Gloucestershire.

Woman alleging rape faces questioning by accused

Hannah Pool

A WOMAN who claims she was repeatedly raped during a 16-hour ordeal by a man she met at a bus stop was cross-examined by her alleged attacker in the Old Bailey yesterday.

Raistan Edwards, aged 42, of Catford, south-east London, has pleaded not guilty to three charges of rape and one of anal rape, and has chosen to defend himself.

The court had been told that on the night of the alleged attack, Edwards struck up conversation with the woman when she spotted her too was wearing a red AIDS awareness ribbon.

The 32-year-old mother of two told yesterday how she avoided walking through a

deserted park at midnight because she was worried Edwards was following her.

"Because of your approaches to me, I did not want to walk past a desolate area with no street lights, no buses — basically a desolate dark place which under these circumstances would have been very frightening for a woman," she said.

Denying that she went to the defendant's home willingly, the woman said she thought there would be a better chance of attracting attention and getting help if she went with him.

When Edwards asked her a series of questions about her daily travels, the woman replied: "I do not know what you are trying to do. Are you trying to intimidate me?" The case continues.

Ban on handguns 'could cost £1 bn'

Big payout warning as shooters sue police over Dunblane

Duncan Campbell Crime Correspondent

MEMBERS of shooting organisations are trying to head off handgun legislation by warning that the cost of compensating gun owners could reach £1 billion.

They are also taking legal action against Central Scotland police for loss of earnings which they claim has resulted from the Dunblane massacre.

But last night the figure of £1 billion was attacked as "highly unrealistic" by anti-gun organisations who added

that shooters would be entitled to full compensation if there is a ban. He said that such compensation was guaranteed under the European Convention on Human Rights. He estimated the cost of compensation at around £1 billion. There were 200,000 to 250,000 pistols in legal circulation, he said, and a further 300,000 to 500,000 in stock. The pistols cost around £500 each and their accessories (magazines, holsters, safes for storage etc) would almost double the figure. Added to compensation paid to shooting-related businesses which, he said, employed up to 10,000 people, the total cost was "close" to £1 billion.

Yesterday, Guy Savage, of the Shooters' Rights Association, said that his organisation had received legal advice

withdrawing the firearms licence of Thomas Hamilton, the Dunblane killer, when there were clear warning signs that he was unstable.

Sales of handguns had slumped. "I haven't worked for five months."

A firearms consultant, Stuart Andrews, said that he was asked by a Labour MP to assess the cost of compensation and estimated that for private owners it could run to £450 million. For owners of shooting ranges and gun clubs the compensation claims could cost £800 million.

A Home Office spokeswoman confirmed that, in evidence given by the Home Office to the Cullen inquiry, it has been accepted that guns might have to be "bought in" and compensation considered.

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'Follow a different line and the journalist or editor will know all about it the next day'. David Hencke on the tactics of party strategists

How high priests of spin keep order

ONCE upon a time journalists talked directly to politicians. Then came Joe Haines, Daily Mirror journalist turned press officer to Harold Wilson, and Bernard Ingham, Guardian journalist turned press officer to Margaret Thatcher.

Both were aggressively loyal and were famous for putting down anyone who crossed them. But they were essentially public relations men, spin doctors committed to selling their leaders' personalities rather than changing party policies.

The Tories stick to the old rules of the ungodly masonic briefing behind closed doors while Labour has opened a new lodge. For Haines then, read Peter Mandelson and Alastair Campbell now, the Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid of modern Labour politics.

Mr Mandelson, MP for Hartlepool, political adviser and election campaign manager to Tony Blair, is credited with severing Labour's links with the voter-repellant policies of the past. Mr Campbell, once of Robert Maxwell's Daily Mirror, is the policies ramraider aiming for the press secretary's suite at 10 Downing Street. Mr Mandelson serves it up and Mr Campbell dishes it out.

No longer do journalists have to ring round members of the shadow cabinet to find Labour stories or search for the Tory party if they want a good government line. It is brought to them on a plate. Just stay in a cubby hole in the parliamentary press gallery and the friendly — or not so friendly — spin doctor will be round as regular as a tea trolley, press release in hand, and a plausible line at the ready.

Stick to that line and there will be no problem. Follow something different and the journalist, editor, or television executive will know all about it the next day.

Access to prominent politicians will become that much more difficult. The person will not be — favourite lobby words — "sound" or "helpful". No exclusive interviews for them, no leaked government documents from Labour, and, if you are a broadcast journalist, no space on that airplane with the party leader.

It is Labour, deprived of office for 17 years, which is taking the most aggressive line with lobby journalists, combined with the creation of an instant rebuttal unit, aimed at Tory "lies" and inside stories about Labour.

The Conservative Party, always more discreet than Labour, has long had what was known as the "white commonwealth" of lobby journalists — the Daily Mail, Daily Express, Daily Telegraph, the Times and the Sun — to place stories. In the 1987 election campaign Norman Tebbit spent hours trying to interest the White Common-

wealth in anti-Labour tales, at Conservative Central Office sessions that lasted long into the night.

Charles Lewington, the smooth ex-Sunday Express lobby journalist who heads Conservative Central Office election campaign, and Sheila Gunn, his deputy, a former Times lobby journalist and diarist, follow the same tradition. A quiet word in the ear of a friendly journalist, a Central Office fax sent direct to George Jones, political editor of the Daily Telegraph, that is how they influence the debate.

Peter Mandelson, first when he worked for Neil Kinnock and now as part of a deadly duo with Alastair Campbell, has rewritten Labour's rules of engagement.

They extract a high entry fee from traditionally hostile papers desperate to get an inside track to Mr Blair. That, and the rise of soundbite TV journalism, has allowed Mr Mandelson's own agenda of "modernising Labour" to set the tone. Sceptics, whether among journalists or the shadow cabinet, are getting short shrift.

Contrary to the impression given by the high priests of spin, some members of the shadow cabinet resent Mr Mandelson's jealous gate-keeping duties in the leader's office. Some find access difficult, others admit they learn of Labour U-turns by reading the newspapers.

Rightly, they believe the lobby is sometimes briefed by Mr Mandelson and Mr Campbell on policy spin before the shadow cabinet or the Parliamentary Labour Party.

One aide to a shadow minister even asked for a list of "independent lobby journalists" to be compiled so he could get across a "message untainted by Mandelson spin".

Richard Jones, a BBC TV journalist and author of a recent book on spin doctors, says Mr Mandelson is the first spin doctor with a policy agenda which he is pushing through successive Labour leaders.

He also believes Mr Mandelson goes further than any other party adviser in researching his lobby prey.

"He actually researches his journalists so he can place the right story with them," says Mr Jones. "He knows their strengths and weaknesses, he knows the hierarchy where they work and he is not averse to leaking information against them if they do not do what he wants."

Both Mr Mandelson and Mr Campbell complain relentlessly to any newspaper or TV editor if they do not like what they read or see.

Another Campbell and Mandelson tactic, according to a BBC reporter, is to wait until a great gaffe is made. Then they visit the hapless editor to complain, and attempt to exact not only an apology but other demands — like removing troublesome reporters from covering future events.



The lobby in Parliament where politicians, spin doctors and journalists meet for 'off the record' comments and briefings

PHOTOGRAPH BY GARRY WEASER

Doctoring the news: Six expert players of the game



ALASTAIR CAMPBELL: Tony Blair's press secretary. Age: 38. Background: State school and Cambridge. Wrote soft porn for Forum magazine under pen name Fiviera Gigolo. Reformed alcoholic. Political editor, Daily Mirror and Today (defunct). Tempestuous relationship with Robert Maxwell. Plays bagpipes. Top Spin: Bludgeoned the BBC to lead their TV news with Tony Blair's speech on the day OJ Simpson acquitted. Standard catchphrases: "What's that load of crap you wrote in today's paper?"



PETER MANDELSON: Head of general election campaign. Age: 42. Background: Grammar school and Oxford. Labour grandee background, grandson of Herbert Morrison. Former TUC man and ex-London Weekend TV producer. Dubbed Machiavelli, Rasputin, Prince of Darkness, and worse. Author of this volume, The Blair Revolution: Can Labour deliver? Top Spin: Letting it slip that he was so close to Blair that he was given a secret codename "Bobby" by the party leader so he could deliver confidential telephone advice without other colleagues knowing. Standard catchphrases: "I almost never brief journalists."



CHARLES WHELAN: Press adviser to Gordon Brown. Age: 41. Background: Private fee-paying school. Communist until 1980, press officer for the old Amalgamated Engineering Union. A bit scruffy, most at home in a smoke-filled drinking den. Shed old communist image and gold earring when he joined Gordon Brown's team. Top Spin: Getting Ken Clarke to denounce a recent embarrassing leaked document as a product of "kicks from the Treasury." Backfired a bit when it was found to be written by Labour activists. Standard catchphrases: "I don't know anything about it and I am not responsible."



CHARLES LEWINGTON: Director of information, Conservative Central Office. Age: 36. Background: Public school and Bath university. Ex-Western Daily Press, Daily Express and Political Editor, Sunday Express. Dapper, expensive tastes in shoes, wine and food. Tory women are said to swoon when they see him. Nickname is "Lord Charles". Top Spin: Distancing himself from the disastrous "Two Ronnies" (Haseltine and Mawhinney) launch of the spoof Labour manifesto, The Road to Ruin. Standard catchphrases: "Could you come over here and have a quiet word."



SHEILA GUNN: Deputy head of communications, Conservative Central Office. Age: 47. Background: Public school, Rose from a newsdesk secretary on the Times to a lobby journalist and diary editor. Expensively dressed and coiffured, leapt to notoriety after becoming mistress number three in the life of Steven Norris, the former transport minister. Charming, disarmingly tough lady. Top spin: Getting confidential details of immigrant cases into the public domain to boost the Government's tough asylum law and sending faxes of pulled Cabinet ministers' speeches to journalists. Standard catchphrases: "Is there anything I can do to help you?"



JANE BONHAM CARTER: Head of communications, Liberal Democrat Party. Age: 37. Background: Public school and University College, London. Long track record in political programmes from Newsnight and Panorama to editor of Channel 4's A Week in Politics. Great grandfather was Herbert Asquith, the Liberal prime minister. Top spin: None yet, only promises of some to come. Standard catchphrases: "I'm not Alastair Campbell."

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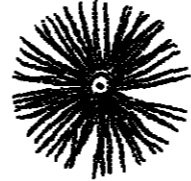
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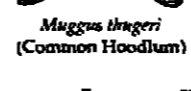
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A dictionary definition

Spin Doctor: A campaign official or public relations expert attached to a party or candidate whose task is to channel facts to the media which put the best possible construction on events in an effort to build momentum — from Brewer's Politics, a phrase and fable dictionary by Nicholas Comfort with a foreword by John Major

Edinburgh Calling

The A5 Guide to the Edinburgh Festival. 140 pages packed with information about the festival — what to watch, where to go, and who to see — plus comprehensive listings of all the events.

Gordon's

Free with the Guardian at the festival, or to order a copy, send a 50p stamp and A4-sized SAE to: Edinburgh Guide, Mancap Workshop, 115 Golden Lane, London EC1Y 0TJ.

The Guardian



Ultra-orthodox rabbis hold a handcuff protest in Jerusalem yesterday over the arrest of colleagues who tried to stop motorists driving on the Sabbath PHOTOGRAPH: MANOOCHER DEGHATI

US agrees 'oil for food' plan to aid Iraq

Mark Tran in New York
THE United States yesterday finally accepted a United Nations plan allowing Iraq to sell oil to buy food, medicine and other humanitarian supplies to ease the burden of sanctions.

The UN oil plan will mark Iraq's return to the oil market for the first time in six years. Iraq oil is expected to flow again in September. The UN may take four or five weeks physically to put in place a comprehensive monitoring regime.

As part of the plan, \$150 million (\$96 million) of each \$1 billion in oil sales will be spent on aid to the Kurds in northern Iraq, now effectively an autonomous region under Western protection.

Under UN resolution 986, adopted last year, Iraq will be allowed to sell \$2 billion worth of oil over six months, on a renewable basis. Baghdad initially objected to the resolution as an infringement of its sovereignty, but eventually agreed to the plan after realizing that there was little prospect of a general lifting of sanctions.

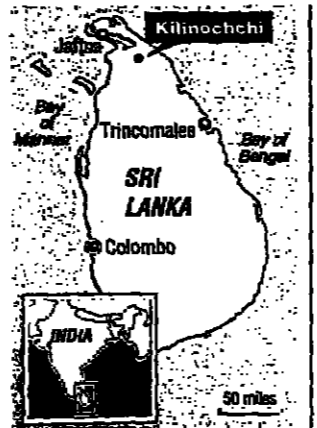
The broader economic noose will remain in place until Iraq has fully complied with UN resolutions demanding the scrapping of its weapons of mass destruction. What hopes Iraq harboured for a lifting of sanctions evaporated after President Saddam's son-in-law and the former head of Iraq's secret nuclear weapons programme, Hussein Kamel Hasan al-Majid, defected to Jordan with damaging revelations.

Ms Albright emphasised yesterday that while "the important point here is to try to get humanitarian assistance to the people within Iraq," the sanctions against Baghdad would remain intact.

Tamils despair as 'peace plan' falls victim to new war against rebels

Sri Lanka's president is turning to the gun, writes Suzanne Goldenberg in Colombo

SRI LANKAN Tamils, who once saw President Chandrika Kumaratunga almost as a saviour, fear that she is falling back on a military solution to end the 13-year civil war.



Tigers kill soldiers," said Paktiasothy Saravanamuttu, a consultant at Colombo university's centre for policy research and analysis. "The expectations were so great that I think the disappointment is commensurate."

The package alone is not going to solve anything," said D. Siddharthan, leader of the Eelam People's Democratic Party. Eelam is Tamil for homeland.

Vigilantes fuel Cape drugs war

David Borensford in Johannesburg

A LARGE crowd of vigilantes brandishing revolvers, pump-action shotguns and chanting "Allah Akbar" put on another show of force outside Cape Town yesterday, as security chiefs tried to defuse the drugs war which erupted on Sunday in South Africa's parliamentary capital.

Local politicians and police exchanged insults as a row flared over who was to blame for the violence, in which a gang leader was shot and burned to death and 18 people injured in a shoot-out between vigilantes and alleged drug dealers.

A LUXURY WEEK ON THE NILE

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News in brief

Abortion row grows as pro-lifers win

ANTI-ABORTION candidates have won all three Republican primary races for the United States Senate in Kansas, Georgia and Michigan, strengthening the grip of the religious right on the party as liberals plot a fightback at next week's convention.

Nuclear ship defies protests

A BRITISH freighter carrying more than 20 tons of nuclear waste has entered the Caribbean Sea despite regional opposition. The 14-member Caribbean Community, a confederation of the region's English-speaking countries, said it would try to stop the ship, which Greenpeace has called a "disaster waiting to happen".

New HIV test gets go-ahead

AMERICANS will soon be able to find out if they have the virus that causes Aids, by taking a simple urine test. The new test, which manufacturers hope to have available within a few weeks, works by detecting antibodies to the HIV virus in urine. Experts say it will appeal to those wary of needles and, unlike the blood test, poses no risk of infection.

Salinas turns up in Ireland

THE elusive former Mexican president, Carlos Salinas de Gortari, has surfaced in Dublin. Mr Salinas, who left his country in financial chaos after relinquishing power in November 1994, has yet to inform the Irish authorities of his presence.

Nerve gas 'went near allies'

GULF war bombing of Iraqi chemical weapons plants sent clouds of low-level nerve gas towards allied positions in Saudi Arabia, United States investigators have admitted. The CIA says Desert Storm air attacks on Muhammadiyah, west of Baghdad, in January 1991 blew up around three tons of the nerve agent sarin, which had been pumped into bombs for the Iraqi air force.

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"Digital data has a fluid form to it. Digital design is like painting where the paint never dries."

Neville Brody

OnLine, G2 page 10

Mars, our cosmic cousin

Suddenly, we are not what we thought we were

IF NASA scientists have found traces of life on Mars, albeit billions of years old, it will rank as one of the outstanding discoveries of all time, a cosmic milestone in mankind's perception of the universe and ultimately of himself. Suddenly, science fiction isn't science fiction anymore. The bald statistics are as daunting as they are humbling. An ancient Martian meteorite containing single-cell bacteria-like organisms, which crystallised from molten rock 4.5 billion years ago, was catapulted from Mars after a major asteroid impact 15 million years ago, before eventually falling onto an ice-field in Antarctica about 13,000 years ago. While billions of dollars were being spent on spacecraft to explore Mars itself, the vital clues were here on Earth on our Antarctic doorstep.

We have now turned a page in a new book, the ending of which is as yet unforthcoming. As Paul Davies argues on the opposite page, Mars and the Earth may have cross-fertilised each other; and, he adds, if a fossil microbe can reach Earth from Mars, why not a live microbe as well, making it difficult to be certain whether life started on Earth or on Mars? Or maybe somewhere else. If a whole new world of speculation is opening up then maybe the meteorite from Mars originated from Earth before getting caught up in a sort of cosmic ping-pong game. Shakespeare may have been more prophetic than he realised when he wrote of "This seat of Mars" and Milton's view of the universe in Paradise Lost ("... and every Starr perhaps a world of destined habitation") may yet be vindicated.

Professor Fred Hoyle, who stoutly maintained there was life on Mars during the 1950s when NASA insisted it was sterile, has counselled caution on the grounds that NASA is desperate to get more funding from a cent-pinching Congress, and so may have been over-enthusiastic in its interpretation of the facts. We must remind ourselves also that it is August, when all sorts of quasi-stories become actual stories to fill the news vacuum as most of the world — the Earth, that is — goes on holiday. (It would have been much more fitting to have announced it in March, the month set aside for Mars.)

Russia's staggering start

But the last thing needed is another new ideology

BORIS YELTSIN is in trouble of all kinds: tomorrow's presidential inauguration may provide a clue to the most personal one — his shaky state of health. Is shifting the ceremony from outside in Cathedral Square to inside the Kremlin a cost-cutting measure — or is it really a device to save Mr Yeltsin (who has not been seen in public for nearly six weeks) from more than the minimum effort? If the motive is financial, it can only be a minuscule gesture. Last month, the IMF suspended its latest loan disbursement, citing Moscow's failure to collect taxes. This week, the finance ministry reveals that the federal Russian government has collected only 63 per cent of the planned tax intake for the first half of the year. And the economics minister says that he is considering putting off some of Mr Yeltsin's extravagant campaign promises — for more social spending and support for domestic industry — in an effort to bring down the budget deficit. This is unlikely to help solve the debt cycle, which has already hit a great deal of industry particularly in the defence sector, where the government fails to pay for work done so that the factories cannot pay their debts — or even their workers. Yesterday's latest headline case concerns a nuclear submarine maintenance plant in the Russian Far East, whose assets have been seized by the local water company and a bank. At least they appear to have left the actual subs alone.

Perhaps the most remarkable feature of post-election Russia is the calmness with which a grim situation is accepted on all sides. Foreign economic advisers stick to their familiar view that things must get worse before they get better. (Some claim to see signs already of an underlying improvement.) Foreign governments try to pretend that Mr Yeltsin's state of health is not deeply disturbing. The mafia-ridden nature of Soviet society is taken for granted, and in some quarters even interpreted as an ugly but inescapable feature of the shift towards a fully marketised economy. Mr Yeltsin's election pledges are acknowledged to have been almost entirely phoney and yet everyone is resigned to the result. The latest bloodshed in Chechnya — where he claimed to be promoting peace — is the most blatant example. Much of the Russian electorate seems to accept the deception, though the Communist Party, now painfully reconstituting itself as the People's Patriotic Union, may offer a chance for second thoughts at the regional elections in the autumn.

None of this necessarily means that we should predict any dramatic upheavals in the near future. Societies have a remarkable capacity for survival under adverse circumstances, and Russia has become used to making the best of the worst. Mr Yeltsin has his own theory on what is needed and has appealed for suggestions on a "national idea to unite all Russians." That is really alarming; the only ideologies around would make things even worse.

Coming to the relief of Derry

The Government had a duty to prevent Saturday's march

THE Government has acted rightly and bravely by effectively banning Saturday's Apprentice Boys' march in Derry. The march organisers and the residents who had opposed their plans have had many chances to reach a compromise. But they failed yet again yesterday, giving the impression that wider issues were increasingly being dragged into their discussions. The danger of a drift into possibly the most serious disorders of the year — and the appalling wider consequences that might follow — was palpable and unacceptable.

A lawful state has an overwhelming responsibility to maintain civil order in such circumstances. Laws exist — in Britain as well as in Northern Ireland — to impose bans on marches, and the British government would have been wrong not to have acted after the breakdown of the local talks. Its lawful and necessary actions should now be supported and obeyed by march organisers and their followers. No one on the nationalist side should engage in triumphalism or any other form of provocation. The security forces should enforce the ban with absolute scrupulousness. There must be no backing-down, as there was at Drumcree.



Letters to the Editor

When the law says life

THE injunction achieved by pro-life campaigners in the case of the aborted twin raises great ethical issues for all of us. Here we seem to have a group of campaigners attempting to interfere with clinical decision-making. They have little, or no, knowledge of the individual patient's circumstances; however, they are permitted to intervene in what would appear to be a perfectly sound and legal procedure, both psychological as well as physical.

YOUR leader (On the edges of ethics, August 6) assumes that a woman in socially strained circumstances is entitled to ask for an abortion. This is very far from the truth. The Abortion Act 1967 requires the woman to establish grounds for an abortion, ie that going to full term would damage the mother's health or that there is a likelihood of giving birth to a handicapped child.

It could be you — but only if you live in London

LORD Gowrie's attempt to justify the wholly disproportionate amount of Lottery money awarded to London venues and elitist arts forms (Let the bids roll in, August 6) could be dismissed as out of touch were it not for the fact that, as chair of the Lottery Arts Board, he is the most significant voice in the distribution of its funds.

rowed and needs to be repaid by future Birmingham council-taxpayers, whereas Lottery funds are a grant and do not give rise to financial liabilities.

Wrong number

WHERE Ofel got it wrong (New upheaval for phones, August 6) was in not using Phone Day 1995, when virtually every number in Britain had to change in any case, to design a system that would genuinely take care of foreseeable requirements.

Wrong number

THE current telephone numbering system allows for 10 billion different lines in the UK, ignoring the superfluous leading zero. This allows for something like 150 lines per man, woman and child, which ought to cope.

Captain Bligh faces his mutiny

JOHN Smith, the BBC's Deputy Finance Director (Letters, August 6), says he has to ensure that the licence-fee payer does not unfairly subsidise other services, by which I presume he means the World Service.

Lilley's old line

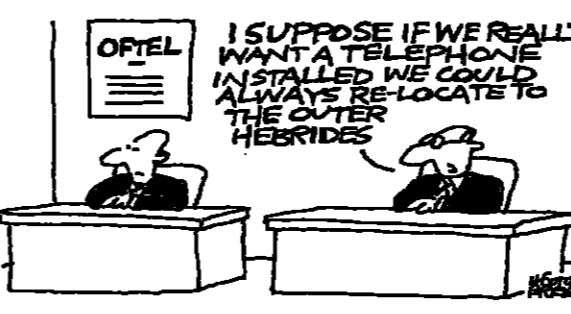
HAVING had a career in HSS which lasted over 10 years, I was, from 1985-1986, manager of one of the department's freephone information lines. I had a team of dedicated staff who answered calls, often discovering that people had struggled for years without claiming benefits to which they were entitled.

Boyson R, must try harder

SIR Rhodes Boyson attacks the modular A-level system by saying that the results are "not worth the paper they are written on" (Exam chiefs attack limit on number of A-level re-sits, August 6). But education is not about a test of memory.

A Country Diary

THE BURREN, IRELAND: Our French visitors and Mary Ann decided to scale the heights of Mullaghmore, while I kept to the lowlands to fulfil my wish of walking round the turlough (or disappearing lake) at its foot. We had seen from a distance waterlilies on the turlough — these I wished to see up close.



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Handwritten note: "السلامة"

Diary

Matthew Norman

I AM intrigued by a line in Alan Watkins's Independent on Sunday column. "Mr Nicholas Soames used to find her highly attractive," writes Mr Watkins of Clara Shortt, "and would speak of her, 'and would speak of her on the Terrace.' Although one ex-girlfriend described coitus with him as 'like having a wardrobe fall on you, with the key sticking out', we recall Alan Clark's diary entry about the Armed Forces minister having a potent aphrodisiac. Perhaps Fatty's not quite the waste of space he would appear? Perhaps, who knows. Miss Shortt returns his feelings? Fatty's in gastronomic-paradise territory this week, on what his office claims is "Armed Forces business", and Miss Shortt's office resolutely fails to return phone calls. But the diary's masthead says plans are not dead, merely on ice.

BAD news for the Griffiths, a former member of the Tackling Crime and Anti-social Behaviour Association, has decided to stand against sitting Tory MP Toby Jessel. Mr Griffiths was expelled last year, reports the Fortean Times, after making a speech to an audience of two, arguing that criminals should be killed; all homosexuals should commit suicide; and all those claiming social-security benefit should gun each other down in the street. Mr Griffiths, now standing under the Antichrist banner, says he has known himself to be the Antichrist for a long time, but has felt that going public might damage his political career.

I AM close to sacking my youth-culture correspondent, John Redwood. The Britpop expert has gone on holiday to a place described by his office as "somewhere foreign" without leaving a contact number. This means we have no way of learning his opinion on the incident at the Oasis concert in which Noel Gallagher addressed Chris Evans (who, unlike Mr Redwood, was in the audience) as "gingerbollocks". It's all very well writing articles about the Lightning Seeds, but what Mr Redwood has to learn is that at the cutting edge of Fleet Street, you simply can't go gallivanting off "somewhere foreign" without letting the desk know how to get in touch. This is his final warning.

DESPITE his recurrent inner-ear infection, Heinz chairman Tony O'Reilly won a much-needed pay rise last year. His salary went from £1.3 million in 1994 to a more realistic £41.3 million, largely thanks to stock options. Mr O'Reilly's media interests include a hefty stake in the Independent titles, neither of which is a notable fan of fat-cat salaries: the Independent on Sunday has been a fierce critic of share options, arguing that they do not lead to wealth creation for anyone but the recipient — something borne out by Heinz's disappointing profits in recent years.

OTHER city news concerns Terry Major-Ball: Allders, owners of his beloved Allders of Croydon, is spending £23 million buying shops from rival Owen Owen. "Oh dear," he says gravely, "it's only a year since they had another floor put on. I hope they're not overstretching themselves." This apart, Terry is buoyant. "I'm looking forward to lunch tomorrow," he says. "This will be our third." No, I say, the second. "No," says Terry, "there have been two before." There has, I insist, been just the one. Terry concedes. "You're right, the other lunch was with Marie. A very nice young lady. I must be confusing her with you." Upon this baffling note, we say adieu.

FROM the University of Washington comes advice that may prove vital should we suffer a cold winter. Dr Amanda Adler reports that, while leaving school in a temperature minus 25 degrees, an Alaskan boy stopped to lick a handrail and was instantly frozen to it by tongue and lip. When his father found no other way to free him, he simply urinated into his son's mouth. It sounds easy, but try explaining that one to Cleveland social services.



Red blood under Major's bed

Commentary

Hugo Young

IN the kingdom of red-blooded men, he who hesitates can only be a wimp. That's the trouble with the Government's line on Europe and the single currency. The best songs belong to the enemy within. Michael Fortillo was born red-blooded. Michael Howard has acquired the substance, Peter Lilley's pallid cheeks tell a lie. There is the easy message, temporarily suppressed at source, but spoken for by all the loudest voices in the Tory Party. Get out of the single currency now, they say, even before we get in. Clarity, swagger, sovereignty: such badges are becoming irresistible to a party that faces electoral disaster. The Government line, by contrast, makes a virtue of chronic indecision. It's Messina all over again. Poised between unpalatable, ministers struggle to keep the choice open. But it's also different from Messina, which happened 40 years ago, in that this time we have no bargaining-position. Nobody wants us

all that badly, as all of Europe wanted us in the Common Market. The price of swaggering will be one-sided. That's what the official line is desperately aware of. But keeping things open is not a heroic posture. With the election coming, and both main parties apparently procrastinating, it looks downright indefensible. Actually, the line isn't as dilute as the red-bloods say it is. Both Mr Major and Mr Blair are prepared to accept a single currency. This is a big position. They don't talk about it much, but that's the platform they start from. While both leaders hedge it round with all kinds of qualifications, neither says the prospect of economic and monetary union is grotesque. Hesitation, however, is the operating mode. The Tories' basic text is the concordat of April 3, when Major announced the deal whereby Kenneth Clarke was persuaded to accept an EMU referendum. Clarke, Malcolm Rifkind and Brian Mawhinney held a press conference, based on this text, which says "we will be keeping our option open at the next election." This leads to the other part of the case, which is more familiar. Swagging off the field now is a way of withdrawing not just from the game but from influencing the rules. It excludes the possibility of re-entry being desirable later, on terms other than those avail-

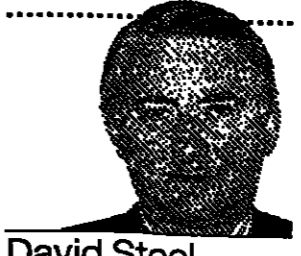
able to applicants without a bargaining hand to play. Behind the thinnest temporising disguise, it forecloses the future in a way that may appeal to red-blooded romancers but, in so doing, rides over every complexity of statesmanship. Partial foreclosure is already provided for. Nothing could happen fast anyway, even under the concordat. Our guarantee is the referendum: a risky venture, courting political disaster, hard therefore to mobilise, harder still to win. The referendum should be assurance enough for all but the kind of sceptic who doesn't believe the public know what is good for them. In any case, there's another hurdle. The Government can't just abandon the EMU opt-out. One of the little sceptic sweeteners inserted into the Maastricht Bill obliges it to pass a law explicitly to that effect: more chance to keep the Commons churning. These are for-

Britain will anyway not want to join in 1999, and because a post-election Major government that tried to get in would certainly split the party, why pretend any longer that the matter is in doubt? Why not come out, with that clarity for which the electorate is yearning, and say that Britain, in place of five years of saying maybe, can promise five years of saying no? That would certainly be red-blooded. It might give more than half the Tory Party a terrific thrill. It would put Labour on the spot. Labour could be more easily depleted of the party that wants to get rid of the pound. The fine print would disappear from the position that now unites both leaderships in their careful indecision. This might please not just ideologues but tacticians. For anyone who can persuade themselves that the voters are fired up by EMU to the exclusion of any other issue, it would chart a course towards the party of British nationalism. Mr Fortillo, at the weekend, spoke on GMTV as though the moment were just around the corner. What this invites, however, is the surrender of the wimp. And that they will not offer. Although their policy, like most policies engaging with the real world, lacks instant thrills, their character is not wimpish. If the April 3 concordat doesn't hold the Chancellor departa. Glibly, the red-bloods say: let him. John Major, there's still decent reason to hope, knows better. But it is a test of his residual statesmanship that he should see this, and not be seduced by the kamikaze appeal put forward by the likes of John Redwood. He has not, after all, been a wholly reliable opponent of sceptic follies. We are already winding up to the autumn manoeuvres, and possibly the most corrosive Euro-battle of his time. For Euro will out.

Why not say that Britain, in place of five years of saying maybe, can promise five years of saying no?

mildable barricades to anything that looks like impetuosity. They make redundant any need to state here and now when a government of either party would activate its declared willingness, in certain circumstances, to take sterling into a European currency. But they are not enough for the red-bloods, whose case for a pledge is a mixture of inducement and threat. This is what they are saying: because EMU may anyway not happen, because

Abortion can still be the least of the evils



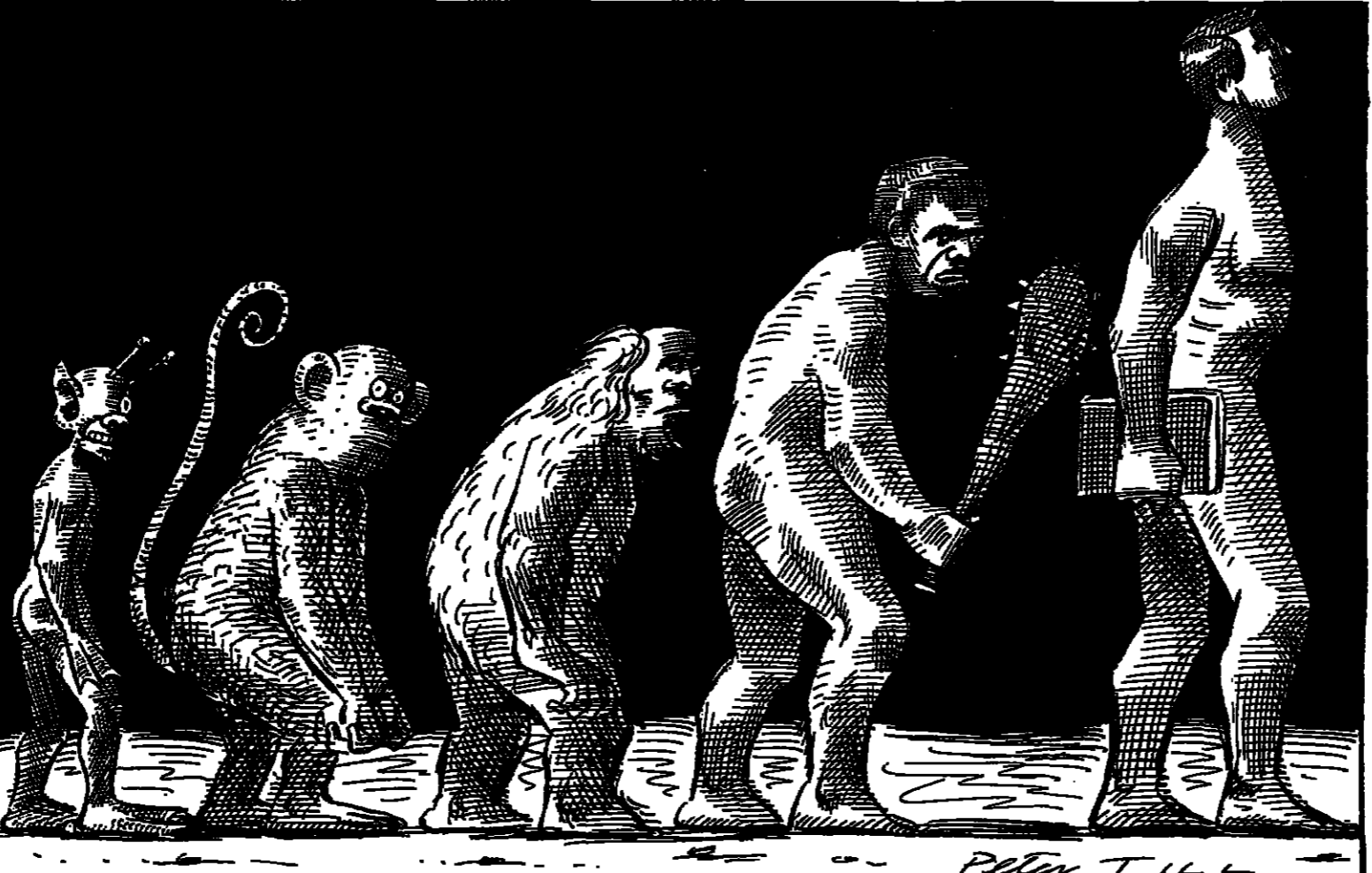
David Steel

I HAVE always respected the minority view in the population which articulates that life begins at the moment of conception. To those who hold that view, then of course even the destruction of a microdot embryo is the same as murder, but these people have no right to inflict that view on the majority of the population who do not share it. Most concerned doctors whom I have met undertake these decisions very seriously, and in each case regard abortion, if they agree to it, as the lesser of two evils.

The anti-abortion organisations which have been behind legal challenges this week are simply using the worrying case of the aborted twin to have another bash at the 1967 Abortion Act. These are the same people who, a fortnight ago, were campaigning against the destruction of 3,000 microdot embryos. The case in the news this week has been a highly unusual and marginal one which has provoked an understandably anxious debate. But it is important to think of what might have happened to this woman in years past. Thirty years ago, if she had been in "straightened circumstances" and desperate having found herself pregnant, finding it difficult to cope with one child already, she could well have ended up among the criminal abortions. Or she may have finished among the many women who cluttered the public wards of our hospitals with the kinds of cases never seen nowadays as a result of botched abortions, either self-induced or criminally performed by someone else. She might even have been among the 30 to 50 women a year who died as a result of criminal abortion, a statistic that is thankfully no longer in our public records. The result, in any event, could have been the loss of both foetuses.

Coming up to 20 years ago, in 1976, under the law I introduced, she could well have persuaded two doctors that she required an abortion, irrespective of whether she was carrying twins; and again both foetuses would have been lost. In 1996, because of the development of medical science, it has been possible, as I understand it, for a group of consultants in discussion with her to agree to the termination of one half of the pregnancy. The question arises: which of these three courses is the least objectionable? The Rt Hon Sir David Steel MP sponsored the 1967 Abortion Act. On the surface it would ap-

pear to be the last, but like many people I have reservations about this relatively recent process of being able to abort one foetus (or more) in the womb while leaving another intact, a technique which has been developed as a result of *in vitro* fertilisation and the dangers of multiple births. This is yet another example of new ethical dilemmas which have come upon us as a result of medical advances. We all marvel, for example, that heart operations can be conducted on foetuses. We have also to remember that if this woman lived in France or one of several other European countries, she could, up until the 12th week of pregnancy, simply have made her own choice to have an abortion. That is not possible in Britain, where the certification of two medical practitioners is required; and our total rate of abortion is still much less than that of the US and several of our nearest neighbours. We should also remind ourselves about the section of the Act under which this operation, and indeed many others, was carried out: that "two registered medical practitioners are of the opinion, formed in good faith, that the continuance of the pregnancy would involve risk to the life of the pregnant woman, or of injury to the physical or mental health of the pregnant woman, or any existing children of her family greater than if the pregnancy were terminated... In determining whether the continuance of a pregnancy would involve such risk of injury to health, account may be taken of the pregnant woman's actual or reasonably foreseeable environment". This is a clear direction that Parliament intended that the medical profession should take all circumstances into account. And that is what the campaigners object to. If the Act were repealed or narrowed, we would simply see a return to the pre-1967 situation. The Act's opponents' problem is that they never campaigned against dangerous and criminal abortions; they only campaigned against safe and legal abortions. Since 1967 the Act has been challenged many times by various private members. Each time, Parliament has declined the challenge, with the one exception (which I supported myself) of changing the upper age limit from 28 weeks of pregnancy to 24. And 29 years on, I still believe that was the only thing I would have changed. Certainly the other issues of *in vitro* fertilisation and partial abortion are legitimate subjects for medical discussion — but for discussion among concerned organisations and experts, as matters of medical policy, and not among MPs as matters of legislation.



Return ticket to Mars

Paul Davies argues that since the planets have been hurling rocks at each other for aeons, life on Mars could have come from Earth. Or vice versa

ASA's sensational announcement of evidence for Martian micro-fossils signals a dramatic U-turn in scientific opinion about the Red Planet. Twenty years ago scientists had all but written off Mars as an abode for life following the Viking Lander missions. Samples of Martian topsoil scooped up by the Viking craft failed to show any convincing signs of organic activity. Moreover, the surface temperature and atmospheric pressure turned out to be dimly low. In short, Mars looked to be a sterile, forbidding planet. Now scientists are questioning this negative conclusion. Even before yesterday's announcement, sentiment was shifting. Several Mars experts have for some time been expressing cautious optimism that Mars may once have even harboured life. Some have even gone so far as to suggest that Martian microbes may still survive today, deep beneath the surface. One reason for this change of heart was the discovery of life in some unusual places on Earth. In the late 1970s biologists were astonished to find organisms living in the ocean floor, several kilometres down, in the super-heated water close to hot volcanic vents. Here there is no sunlight, and the temperatures can be well above 100 degrees Celsius. The fluids erupting

from the vents are richly leached with sulphurous and other chemicals that would kill most familiar organisms in pretty short order. Yet there are microbes — thermophiles — that positively thrive under these extreme conditions. Thermophiles are independent of the food and energy chain that sustains surface life. Instead, they make a living from the hot chemical broth that vomits from the vents. This prolific source of energy supports an entire ecology that includes crabs and tube-worms several metres long. The deep-ocean thermophiles, together with their microbial cousins living in the boiling geysers of Yellowstone National Park, are no evolutionary quirks. Indeed, there could be thousands of these different species of microbes. They are so weird that they form a separate kingdom of life in their own right, called archaea. Many biologists think the archaea closely resemble the Earth's earliest living organisms. But this is not all. Deep drilling projects in the ocean floor, and also beneath the continents, have revealed traces of microbes in the crust of the Earth itself. Evidence is accumulating of an entire underworld of exotic life-forms, with microbes teeming in the hot rocks beneath our very feet. The importance of this discovery for Mars is that simi-

lar conditions are likely to have prevailed beneath the Martian surface too during its 4.5-billion-year history. Photographs show ancient river systems on Mars, including huge canyons and deltas cut by running water. Geologists suspect that massive flash floods were caused by volcanoes melting underground ice deposits. The combination of volcanic activity and water could have created a perfect environment for Martian thermophiles. Earth's suitable conditions are one thing, the actual emergence of life quite another. Biologists still have scant ideas how life originated. Darwin suggested it started in a "warm little pond" on the Earth's surface. The favoured theory is that chemical self-organisation occurred in a soup of organic compounds, creating molecules of greater and greater complexity, until the first truly self-replicating molecule was produced. The trouble is, nobody knows how long this prebiotic phase lasted, or whether the first organism formed on the Earth's surface, or somewhere else entirely. Also, scientists are sharply divided over whether the formation of life was a completely freak occurrence, or a more or less inevitable result given the right conditions. Curiously, even if life on Earth is a squillion-to-one freak occurrence, we cannot rule out life on Mars. Over the last decade or so, geologists have become convinced that a handful of meteorites found on Earth originated on the planet Mars. In fact, a fragment of one such Martian meteorite has been in the possession of the University of Adelaide for years. The mete-

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Herman Siles Zuazo

Revolutionary rabbit

HERMAN SILES ZUAZO, who has died aged 83, was one of the most important figures in Bolivia's turbulent political history.

man would have kept power for himself. Instead, he dutifully surrendered it to his party chief, Victor Paz Estenssoro, who took several days to return from exile in Argentina.

Siles Zuazo was the son of a president and a full-blooded political animal. But his career seemed almost amateurish.

conspired with the military to overthrow Paz in November. But this unlikely alliance was short-lived and Siles was soon forced into exile.

20,000 per cent a year, one of the highest levels ever recorded. But, mindful of the mistakes of his first administration, Siles tried to renege the 1952 revolution from the left.



Siles Zuazo... an amateur in the double-crossing world of Bolivian politics

Kevin Moorhouse

Flight of the enchanted

KEVIN MOORHOUSE, who has died in an air crash aged 50, flew the only airworthy de Havilland Mosquito in the world.

development programmes, he flew generations of aircraft almost back to the Mosquito era; maritime reconnaissance Shackletons born in the 1940s.



Moorhouse... air-lifted life

aeronautical engineering degree course — where he had taken up gliding — after two years, but in 1967, back at BAe at Woodford, he gained an HNC at Stockport College.

Howard Vernon

To prove a villain

HOWARD VERNON, who has died aged 82, had a gift for chilling an audience's blood. It was an actor whose shaming figure got him down-turned mouth, piercing blue eyes, hatchet profile, and gravelly voice.

the same vein. One which stood out was Christian Jacq's adaptation of Guy de Maupassant's short story *Boule de Suif* (1945), a deliciously ironic tale of the 1870 Prussian occupation of Rouen with Vernon as the Prussian officer who extorts the favours of a plump lady of the streets — Boule de Suif.

Birthdays

Isabel Allende, novelist, 53; Prof Jack Baldwin, chemist, 57; Keith Barron, actor, 61; Ronald Biggs, one of the great train robbers, 67; Dennis Canavan, Labour MP, 64; Keith Carradine, actor, singer and songwriter, 46; Benny Carter, jazz musician and composer, 89; Lord Chapple, former trade union leader, 75; Dr Michael Clark, Conservative MP, 61; Viscount Combermere, biblical lecturer, 67; Sarah Dunant, thriller writer, journalist and broadcaster, 46; David 'The Edge' Evans, rock guitarist, 35; Derek Fatchett, Labour MP, 51; Angus Fraser, cricketer, 81; Lord (Barney) Hayhoe, former Conservative MP, 71; Margaret Hodge, Labour MP, 53; Dustin Hoffman, actor and perfectionist, 59; Dino De Laurentis, film producer, 77; Nigel Mansell, champion racing driver and autobiographer, 43; Elizabeth Monkhouse, adult educationalist, 84; Sir Patrick Neill QC, lawyer and former Warden of All Souls, Oxford, 70; Prof Roger Penrose, mathematician, 65; Jason Wooley, cricketer, 27; James Sherwood, the president of Sea Containers plc, 63; Barbara Sonnentag, fashion designer, 34; Connie Stevens, actress and singer, 58; Esther Williams, champion swimmer and movie actress, 73; Jimmy Witherspoon, traditional blues singer, 75; Sir Alan Muir Wood, civil engineer, 75.

Deaths Notices

TYRRELL, Marjory dedicated teacher, socialist, Co-ordinator OXFAM worker in Somalia, Fulham, Hounslow and Chelsea 1912-1996 died suddenly August 3rd. Much loved and dearly missed by husband Jack, brother Hugh, sons Chris and Jerry, grandchildren Jack and Sophie, and the family. Buried in the cemetery at Horsham. Friends and the Teachers' Benevolent Fund, members and colleagues in Chelsea, to meet at the funeral at Horsham Crematorium, at 12 noon, Monday 12th August. No flowers. Donations to OXFAM. Enquiries 01782 492512.

Len Coldwell

Good man at the county wicket

LEN COLDWELL, who has died suddenly aged 63, had his finest hour at Lord's in 1962 when he bowled England to a big victory over Pakistan in his Test debut in front of a Saturday crowd of 20,000 people.

with Jack Flavell. Together they took Worcestershire to the brink of the County Championship in 1962, and then to the club's first-ever titles in 1964 and 1965. It was a classic pairing: Flavell bowling and Coldwell bowling in the field. With top-quality batsmen led by Tom Graveney and Don Kenyon, high-class spin from Norman Gifford, and a lovely spirit throughout the side, Worcestershire supplanted Yorkshire as the most feared team in the country.

ness of his hips and knees. According to Basil O'Donnell, Coldwell would bowl out exactly where to bowl to each individual opponent: sometimes he would aim straight at the stumps, sometimes he would use the extreme edge of the crease. His methods proved less effective at the highest level. His success against Pakistan got him on to the 1962-63 tour of Australia, but conditions were less helpful and batsmen less easy to think out. He returned for the first two Tests against Australia in 1964, was obliged to bowl a 100-minute spell in conditions which Wisden says would have been far more responsive to spin, and was never chosen again.

then retired in mid-season and returned to Devon, where he was born and first played. In later years, he helped run a seaside café and became captain of Teignmouth Golf Club. His comradeship with Flavell lasted way beyond cricket. The two of them were firm friends as well as partners in the fast bowling business, and the families always stayed with each other on holidays together. Coldwell had been looking forward to a hip replacement operation and to getting rid of some of the pain that had bothered him since his playing days.



Underpaid and overworked... Len Coldwell bowling

Jackdaw



The letter

FROM Grubman Indursky Schindler & Goldstein, P.C. July 19, 1996 Dear Mr. Myers: We represent Random Ventures, Inc., the exclusive worldwide proprietor of the trademark "George", which trademark it has previously licensed for use in connection with "George" magazine and various online and Internet versions of the same.

upon and violates our client's trademark and various other exclusive proprietary intellectual property rights. This is a serious violation and misappropriation of our client's rights and, accordingly, we hereby demand that you immediately cease and desist from any such use of the name "George" if and/or any variations thereof which may infringe our client's rights. We also demand an accounting of all revenues you have derived from the foregoing activities so that we can properly assess the damages our client has suffered. If you do not immediately comply with the foregoing (and confirm to us in writing within five days of the date of this letter that you have done so), we will have no choice but to immediately begin to pursue any and all legal and/or equitable remedies that may be available to our client. The foregoing is without prejudice to all rights and remedies our client may have in connection with this matter, all of which are hereby expressly reserved. Very truly yours, Lawrence Shire

This, allegedly, is the original letter that George Magazine's lawyers sent to George Myers Jr., publisher of the e-zine "George Jr" and owner of the domain www.georgejr.com. It is found at newsgroup alt.journalism.

tion.) Anyway, your request to kill off my site seems a bit dramatic considering the size and nature of your publishing operation and that my site is devoted to literary, humor and software enthusiasts primarily. I trust that this now brings this matter to a close. Very sincerely, George Myers Jr. George's Home Page, George of Japan, George Washington, George's Literature, George Burns, Art by George Homepage, George's News and Magazines, The George Store, George Cier, Firewell George Jr. george.html, George magazine. George Jr's reply to George's Home Page. George Jr gently demands the fate of his small homepage. "All I want is my name, but I can't afford the lawyers".

Big story AN 18 year-old student claimed on her car insurance for an accident whilst "visiting friends". She had a bit of a high curb, causing the vehicle to roll over. What about her friends? We can't imagine who they were, considering she'd delivered her Escort on to Silverstone race track. A man claimed for damage to his windscreen. He was driving along a narrow country lane when a cow fell off a ledge — as they often do — on to the windscreen. After breaking hard, the cow slid off the bonnet and smacked off. A man claimed for the amount he'd been charged by a farmer for killing one of his ostriches. His dog had escaped from the car during a visit to the farm, and chased after a terrified ostrich, causing it to run into the car and break its neck. A man claimed for stolen items from his house after a burglary. A collection of handcrafted leather and PVC hoods for bondage, as well as sundry whips, chains and crops. The insurance company paid out. And why not? Maxim, with the help of Direct Line, Eagle Star and several other insurance companies collected a few real claims that could even beat the porkies you



Letter Richard Wolfe writes: In 1964, eight recent graduates from the University of Bristol spent their last summer of freedom in a hired minibus touring Eastern Europe. When we got to Prague (via Berlin, Moscow and Kiev), the engine fell out and we were "forced" to spend a week in that marvellous city. We met Abdulrahman Mohamed Babu (obituary, August 6) in a café, with his usual entourage of East African students putting the world to rights. We were welcomed into the group and generously entertained by Babu, with good food and endless discussions about African and world politics. Babu was trying to persuade the Czech regime to set up a shoe-making factory in Tanzania. The final night we all had the most amazing Chinese meal with about 50 guests. A knowledgeable and kind man. Truly, it was four days to remember.

into the buggy. And then they have a sort of reception in the tearoom. If it's a de-luxe, then they have a cake that's precisely the sort of cake that Lucy Maud had. Also, if it's a de-luxe, Anne comes to the reception. Someone playing Anne, of course. "The Anne of Green Gables phenomenon in Japan has stretched to Japanese couples travelling across the world to get re-married in the church that Anne's author L.M. Montgomery got married in on Prince Edward Island, Charlottetown. Apparently, this almost in the book as Maud's life was so indistinguishable from her fictional heroine. Calvin Trillin, in his novel, Japanese couples during their three-day group tours to the island. New Yorker

Jackdaw wants jewels. E-mail Jackdaw@guardian.co.uk; fax 0171-713 4966; Jackdaw, The Guardian, 118 Farringdon Road, London EC1R 3ER.

Emily Sheffield

Shareholder might return chief to power

US suits

Miners may try to Hong Kong bonan

Miners may try to save last big pit in North Wales, page 12

Hong Kong bonanza for Standard Chartered, page 12

Financial Editor: Alex Brummer
Telephone: 0171-239-9610
Fax: 0171-833-4456

Finance Guardian



Precious waste... Miles Brough (above), managing director of Jesse Brough Metals, with a lump of foundry dross. The company has won the Small Business category in an award scheme backed by the North Staffordshire Chamber of Commerce and Industry, for its reclamation of aluminium which is normally dumped in landfill sites. PHOTOGRAPH: DAVID MANSELL

US suitor for East Midlands

Chris Barrie
Business Correspondent

TAKEOVER fever returned to the electricity industry with a vengeance yesterday...

vived the last bout of takeovers, Dominion Resources of Richmond, Virginia, declined to comment on a published report that it had been blocked by its state regulator from bidding for the Nottingham...

hopes of mounting the bid, although the company is likely to consult its lawyers about the prospects of overturning the commission's stance.

stalking English regional electricity companies in relation to its commercial arrangements with its customers.

three wholly owned subsidiaries, 10,000 employees and assets worth \$14 billion.

Virginia Power is the largest, supplying electricity to 2 million homes and businesses in Virginia and North Carolina.

Shareholder might returns chief to power

Eurotherm investors flex their muscles and make history, writes Ian King

AN UPRISING by institutional shareholders of Eurotherm, the electronic components group, yesterday succeeded in reinstating the company's former chief executive, Claes Hultman.

Announcing Mr Hultman's return, Sir James admitted that the solution had been "difficult" to achieve, but said Eurotherm was now ideally placed to continue growing profitably.

French to extend stake in rail network

Rebecca Smithers
Political Correspondent

THE French utility group Compagnie Generale des Eaux is set to extend its stake in Britain's rail passenger network by taking control of its second franchise — the busy South Eastern commuter line.

senger revenue, earning £215 million in 1994/95, and employs just over 4,000 staff. The line operates out of London terminal to Surrey, Kent and Sussex and attracts an annual government subsidy of nearly £150 million.

terday that the oldest trains — nearly 40 years old — must be replaced within the first three years of the 15-year franchise.

franchise, and that job cuts were in the pipeline.

Winchester 'spurned by bank'

CREDIT Lyonnais, the troubled French bank, appears to have ordered its metals broking subsidiary in London to terminate a profit sharing agreement with Winchester Commodities, the British metals trader, two years ago, according to an internal document received by the Guardian.

managing director of the group's London-based subsidiary, Credit Lyonnais Rouse, on July 20, 1994, stating that the firm should negotiate an end to both a 20 per cent profit/loss sharing deal and also an option for Rouse to acquire a 20 per cent stake in Winchester.

ker [effectively setting Winchester's trades on the main metals market] have been known to the Securities and Futures Authority (the City watchdog) since the outset of CL Rouse's relationship with Winchester. CL Rouse is fully satisfied that it has met all regulatory and exchange obligations in relation to its business and customers.

The SFA has been investigating the copper market since the summer of 1994 and launched a formal investigation into Winchester's affairs in the autumn of that year after discovering details of the biggest single deal ever transacted in the metals markets.

Something has to give when the Greeks' two greatest national pastimes clash

Helen Smith in Athens

JUST when Greek gamblers thought they were on a winning streak, they have been told they will be forced to go on betting, that they are honest taxpayers.

help crack down on her compatriots' other national pastime — tax evasion.

ernment. Last week, in an unprecedented move, a US federal court summoned the minister to respond to the suit.

to be granted entrance into the country's three highly guarded, state-owned casinos either gambled behind closed doors or flocked to the roulette tables of neighbouring Balkan states.

During the financial year covering the Redr transaction, Messrs Leighton and Bradwell received pay packets in excess of £2 million piece — almost four times their salary in the previous year.



Notebook

Rate decision riven with politics



Edited by Mark Milner

YESTERDAY, the Bank of England told the Chancellor, Kenneth Clarke, in what were (for the Old Lady) pretty robust terms that, far from looking for another cut in interest rates, he should bend his mind to thinking about an increase.

but the Conservatives still lost the election it might well be an incoming Labour Chancellor who has a tough decision to take in the early days of office.

It could be argued that the solution is to remove fundamental economic decisions from the political arena by handing over policy-making to the Bank. Better still if fighting inflation were a vote winner.

Far from suffering from falling confidence, business in run up to the colony's takeover by China (where Standard generates 35 per cent of its business) is booming. Taking in the entire Pacific Rim region, trading profit from personal banking was up by more than 40 per cent.

The only question now is how long Standard can keep up this level of growth. The main uncertainty hangs over its heavy exposure to the Far East home loans market where it is a major participant.

What has become clear since then is that Mr Clarke can overrule the Bank's advice without sending the pound or the gilts market into a tail-spin.

What of the more immediate issue, to raise or not to raise? The Bank is arguing for what amounts to a pre-emptive strike against inflation. A small but timely rise in interest rates (that means sooner rather than later, according to the Bank's chief economist, Mervyn King) would prevent rates having to be raised by a larger amount if the decision were deferred.

While this might not appear remarkable now, it is worth trying to imagine what would have happened in 1993-94 when the Bank and the Treasury first began to go public on the debate over interest rate policy through publication of the inflation report in early 1993 and the minutes of Chancellor/Governor meetings on monetary policy in spring 1994.

One of the group's subsidiaries has been the subject of fraud investigations over the award of contracts, although nobody has been charged. The group has a turnover of £18 billion, with 2,500 separate firms, and 215,000 employees.

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Half the country missing out on upturn in manufacturing

Sarah Ryle

HALF of Britain's regions have yet to experience the full benefits of the recovery in consumer spending and are being squeezed by the continued economic downturn in Europe, a new survey by the Confederation of British Industry showed yesterday.

However, there was some comfort for the Government in the optimism about future demand expressed by executives in the five regions.

Table with 4 columns: Country, Rate, Country, Rate. Includes Australia 1.9350, Austria 16.81, Belgium 45.89, Canada 2.0725, Cyprus 0.8260, Denmark 8.92, Finland 8.87, France 7.52, Germany 2.22, Greece 357.30, Hong Kong 11.84, India 54.73, Ireland 0.9225, Israel 4.84, Italy 2.283, Malta 0.5350, Netherlands 2.4925, New Zealand 2.10, Norway 9.83, Portugal 229.00, Saudi Arabia 5.76, Singapore 2.17, South Africa 8.70, Spain 188.25, Sweden 1.01, Switzerland 1.7825, Turkey 124.479, USA 1.51.

Supplied by NatWest Bank (excluding Indian rupee and Israeli sheqel).

Standard Chartered cheered by HK bonanza

Patrick Donovan
City Editor

STANDARD Chartered yesterday underlined the astonishing consumer spending boom sweeping through its key Hong Kong market in the last days of British sovereignty, announcing that trading profits from personal banking business has grown by more than 40 per cent over the last six months.

Profits from mortgage business in the colony rocketed, according to Standard group chief executive Malcolm Williamson who insisted that the bank remained confident about its exposure to Hong Kong after the Chinese takeover in July next year.

Such was the growth in the Hong Kong market that it now accounts for just under 40 per cent of group profits, surging from £114 million to £153 million over the half year period.

Overall profits increased by £29 million to £448 million and the interim dividend is up by 1p to 4.25p. Overall, the key net interest margin is up from 3.3 per cent to 3.5 per cent with the interest spread increased by 0.3 percentage points to 2.8 per cent. The increase reflected higher profit margins from mortgages.

League table

Latest half year bank profits

- HSBC £2,326m (up 34pc)
- Barclays £1,381m (up 15pc)
- Lloyds TSB £1,140m (up 12pc)
- NatWest £879m (up 23pc)
- Abbey National £588m (up 16pc)
- Standard Chartered £448m (up 29pc)

Abbey predicts loans recovery

Richard Miles

NEW mortgage lending could top £16 billion this year, the first significant rise since the late 1980s, Abbey National, the UK's second largest lender, predicted yesterday.

Reporting a 16 per cent increase in first-half pre-tax profits to £558 million, chief executive Peter Birch said there were "seeds of a recovery" in the housing market. Abbey National is forecasting total lending for the year at £16.4 billion, against £15 billion last year, and £40 billion at the housing market's peak in 1988. But Mr Birch counselled against over-optimism.

He said: "It is a modest increase. If Chancellors and Bank of England Governors get excited at this, how must they have felt in the late eighties?"

Mr Birch said that a more regular market would be around £25 billion.

Chairman Lord Tugendhat said Abbey National's share of the mortgage market had expanded to 15 per cent following its £1.35 billion acquisition of National & Provincial. Its stock of residen-

credit cards and trade business, Standard said.

Profit taking saw shares dip 13p to 639p.

Mr Williamson warned that the bank may be unable to keep up its level of returns within its core Far East market and will be looking to make further economies through a cost-cutting regime which has already seen its cost-income ratio cut by six percentage points to 54.7 per cent. He said there were signs that government concern about the growth of mortgage lending in key Far East markets was being held back by "government measures to calm property lending, making it unlikely that this rate of growth can continue".

Standard said that the goal is to cut the cost-income ratio below the 50 per cent mark which is likely to involve job losses, although he declined to spell out numbers involved.

"Costs over the six-month period rose £20 million to £538 million over the first half of the year. We have reduced headcount to 25,500 and are now considering trying to buy back the strength of the bank's balance sheet. He ruled out any possibility that Standard would follow the lead of British high street banks and spend spare cash on buying back its own shares in order to prop up their value in the market.

He insisted that Standard could generate far more value by continuing to invest heavily in its existing business.

Miners may try to raise £1.2m to buy Point of Ayr colliery, says Martyn Halsall

MINERS' leaders at the last deep colliery in North Wales will today consider trying to buy the pit, for a reported £1.2 million, to avoid its closure.

Otherwise Welsh deep coal mining, which employed 250,000 miners during peak production in 1913, will face a reduction to a single colliery and just 233 jobs, with the closure of the Point of Ayr pit, near Talacre, in North Wales.

A sudden end to the 130-year-old colliery, which has battled for survival since being taken over by RJB Mining four years ago, would reduce Welsh coal production to its lowest for 300 years.

The principality's last deep mined output is the 500,000 tonnes produced annually at profitable Tower Colliery, near Hirwaun, which was resurrected when its workers each invested £8,000 of their redundancy payments to



Clocking off... Yesterday's final shift at the private pit relieved in 1992 by the Government after a national outcry over British Coal closure plans

Last big North Wales pit is suddenly closed

Miners may try to raise £1.2m to buy Point of Ayr colliery, says Martyn Halsall

reopen the Mid-Glamorgan colliery nine months after it closed in April 1994.

Apart from the purchase attempt, the only hope of continuing coal industry work for North Wales's 200 last deep miners lies with transfers to Midlands and Yorkshire collieries owned by RJB, which took over 17 former British Coal pits when they were privatised at the end of 1994.

RJB said yesterday that Point of Ayr was the smallest and least productive of the pits it inherited.

Ironically, the colliery was one of 31 relieved by the Government after a national outcry over British Coal pits which it earmarked for closure in 1992.

Since the takeover, RJB said, it had spent almost £4.5 million switching to new production methods. Around 2.24 million tonnes of an estimated 3.38 million recover-

able low-risk reserves had been extracted, largely for sale to the nearby Fiddlers Ferry power station.

The 313,000 tonnes produced last year made an operating loss of £2.85 million and the half-year to July 1996 had seen further losses of £2.15 million on an output of 177,000 tonnes. One of the pit's two seams, under the Dee estuary, had recently been abandoned.

Bill Rowell, managing director of RJB deep mines, yesterday said closure had become inevitable. He said: "We have done all we can. We have gone that extra mile in an attempt to achieve viability. But the results over a lengthy period make us conclude there is no prospect of achieving sustained viable production in the future."

Mr Rowell conceded that closure was "a poor reward for the experienced and skilled workforce".

He said: "Management and men of Point of Ayr have made every effort to achieve the performance required of viable operations."

Patrick Heesom, local councillor and leading campaigner for the pit's retention, said the closure was "bitter news for the many who fought so hard for years to maintain deep mining in North Wales".

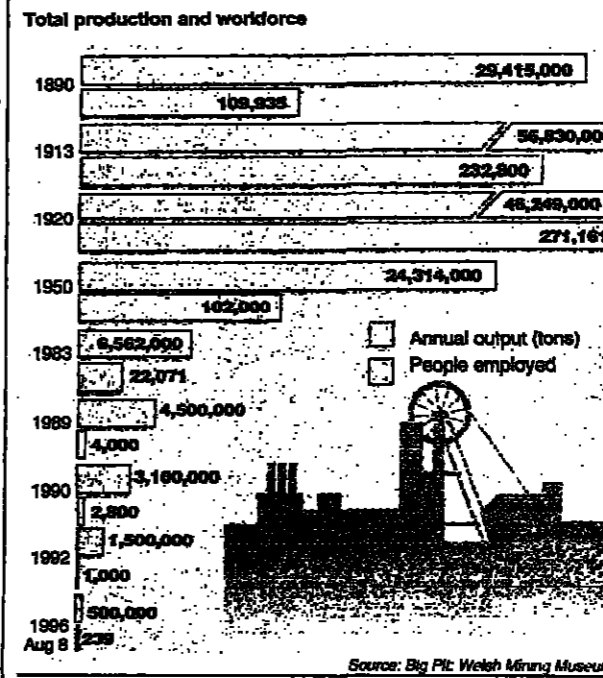
The immediate cessation of production yesterday morning underlined the dramatic collapse of an industry seen as a vital part of the Welsh economy since coal was first used for copper and iron smelting in the 18th century.

The principality's coal production peaked before the first world war, reaching an output of 56.8 million tonnes in the dominant South Wales field in 1913, when 232,800 miners were employed in dozens of collieries across the 56-mile-wide field.

South Wales still supported 140 collieries in 1983.

Total Welsh coal production fell from more than 24 million tonnes to 800,000 tonnes between nationalisation in 1947 and Point of Ayr's closure, as deep mining was replaced increasingly by open-cast extraction.

Devastation in the Welsh coalfields



Pallets underpin lift in GKN profits

Outlook

Chris Barrie

ENGINEERING companies used to complain that the City neither understood them nor spoke their language of long-term investment.

But yesterday such froideure was forgotten as analysts upgraded profit forecasts for GKN amid heady talk of the cash to be made from all things, industrial pallets.

Despite the bright talk, GKN shares fell 9p on the announcement of the interim results, to 1019p. But the shares recovered to close just 3p off at 1025p. The dip follows a 3 per cent hike in recent days as other engineering groups, notably TI and Mayflower, reported sharp rises in first half results.

GKN's first half results were at the upper end of expectations, with an 11.3 per cent rise in pre-tax profits to £181 million on a 3.6 per cent rise in sales of £1.73 billion.

The brightest performance came in aerospace and armoured vehicles, where profits increased by 88 per cent to £38 million. Profits in industrial services rose 42 per cent to £37 million on sales of £174 million.

However, the results from the automotive division suffered from lower car and light truck production in the US and flat output in Europe. The profits of £101 million were similar to last year's interim results.

The results are the first since GKN completed its disposal programme of non-core businesses, leaving the group with businesses selected on the basis that they are capable of a 20 per cent return on assets. There is also a cash pile of £483 million to spend.

The Westland helicopter business is now benefiting from rising production as the EH101 comes on stream. It will deliver 11 helicopters a year on average in the run-up

GKN	
Stock market value	£3.6bn
Share price	1025 3p
Workforce	31,000
Net resources	£483m
Main activity:	
One of the country's biggest engineering groups making car and truck parts, helicopters and armoured vehicles. It also supplies distribution services.	
1/2 YEAR	£ %
Sales	1,728m 3.6
Pre-tax profit	181m 11.3
Earnings/share	31.7p 1.6
Dividend	9.6p 9.7

the need to restructure its armoured vehicle business — in line with all European players — the aerospace and special vehicles division should see growth as a result.

Similarly the automotive business should expand with investments in new territories such as Thailand and the Philippines, as well as growth in China. The next six months should see higher demand for car parts in the US and the UK, offset by a downturn in the truck market in Europe.

But the focus will be on the Chep industrial pallet division. In Europe, Chep now has 39 million pallets in use, up 5 million in the last year and giving GKN a commanding position in the market. The US pallet pool has grown by a third over the same period, to 16 million pallets, and there is growth pencilled in for South America and Asia.

The company is also planning heavy investment in distributing motor parts.

Nick Judge, analyst at NatWest Securities, said potential competitors would now need massive investment to break in to the market and challenge GKN's position.

News in brief

Bespak ex-directors shared £1m payoff

TWO former executives of Bespak, the leading asthma inhaler manufacturer, shared a pay-off of more than £1 million, according to its 1996 annual report published yesterday. Robert King, the former chief executive who left last September, received £825,000 and Patrick Dunne, the former marketing director who quit in March, was awarded £200,000.

Before exceptions, the Norfolk-based company made profits of £8.7 million during the year — making the pay-offs around 12 per cent of pre-tax profits. — Sarah Whitebloom

CU blames weather

BAD weather in the UK and the US in the first half of the year cost insurer Commercial Union £56 million more than in 1995, the company revealed yesterday. CU, which added that the Manches and Docklands bombs had cost it £9 million, was reporting a near 13 per cent drop in its interim pre-tax profits at £216 million.

CU emphasised that although general insurance conditions in the UK remained competitive, it was reaping significant rewards from its life operation. — Pauline Springett

Lloyd's of London revamp

LOYD'S of London yesterday announced it was revamping its disciplinary regime in an effort to speed up its investigatory procedures. The insurance market's chairman, David Rowland, said: "We have been criticised in the past for the slowness of our disciplinary procedures. This new regime will be more comprehensive in its scope and swifter in its process." — Pauline Springett

Mortgage Corporation sold

AMERICAN investment bank Salomon Brothers has sold The Mortgage Corporation, its home loans division, to First National, Ireland's largest building society, for £83 million.

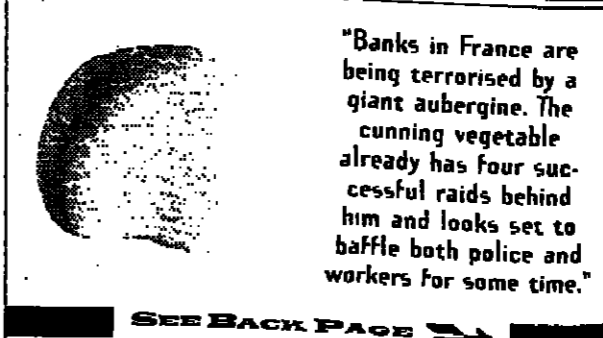
TMC, whose residential mortgage book is worth £1.2 billion, will be subsumed by Mortgage Trust, the central lending company acquired by First National in 1994 for £22 million.

It is believed TMC finance director Denis McCafferty is leaving as part of the deal that will see First National more than treble its UK mortgage assets to around £1.8 billion. — Richard Miles

Software makes debut

SOFTWARE City, the UK's first chain of software-only superstores, was launched amid much brouhaha in London yesterday. Although the first store is not scheduled to open until tomorrow, the company was predicting yesterday that it would have "nearly 40" such outlets by the end of the decade.

Led by a former divisional director of Safeway, Alan Taylor, the company set out its ambitious plans and forecast that it would be making sales turnover of £100 million within four years. Most of the money for the "concept" has come from friends and associates of Mr Taylor and Graham Walker, the chairman. Additional funding has been provided by NatWest. — Sarah Whitebloom



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Brighton a breeze for Easterby

سكانو الجبل

سكيا من الامل

SPORTS NEWS 13 Swinburn and Dettori return

Racing

Brighton a breeze for Easterby

Chris Hawkins
AFTER 35 years as a trainer, Mick Easterby paid his first visit to Brighton yesterday and was so impressed that he could not understand why he hadn't been before.

Jongs but the trouble with the chalk soil is that it drains at a terrific rate — 13 inches in an hour. But it is traditional downland turf with spring in it and it's not half as bad as people think.



Plain sailing... White Plains holds off Tissue Of Lies on his way to victory at Newcastle yesterday

Willie Muir had his first two-year-old winner of the season when Sheer Face justified favoritism by running strongly to beat Mystic Quest in the Marina Maiden Stakes.

Jack took a walk from 7-4 to 11-4 while Sheer Face came in from 4-1 to 5-2. The support for Sheer Face was not a surprise considering he had finished sixth to Pique at Sandown on his debut and Muir confided that he is better than a Brighton horse. "He's a lovely mover but pulls a bit and John Reid

Ron Cox

FRANKIE Dettori returns to the saddle at Newmarket tomorrow night, some two months after fracturing his elbow in a parade-ring fall at Newbury.

Swinburn, who suffered head, shoulder and rib injuries in a life-threatening fall in Hong Kong in February, may yet make his comeback in Ireland or France on Sunday. But yesterday he accepted his first definite domestic booking to partner Talathath at Windsor. This recent Brighton winner is trained by Chris Dwyer, who said: "Walter has ridden this horse twice before when he was with Michael Stoute and was placed both times."

Pontefract with guide to the latest form

Table containing racing results and form guides for Pontefract, including race numbers, names, and odds.

Bath runners and riders

Table containing racing results and form guides for Bath, including race numbers, names, and odds.

Yarmouth tonight

Table containing racing results and form guides for Yarmouth, including race numbers, names, and odds.

Hamilton evening programme

Table containing racing results and form guides for Hamilton, including race numbers, names, and odds.

4.00 SCARMA 4-BIRMINGHAM HORSEPOWER CLASSIC STAKES

Table containing race details for the 4.00 SCARMA 4-BIRMINGHAM HORSEPOWER CLASSIC STAKES.

4.30 WESTRICKS-SCARMA KNOW HOW HANDICAP

Table containing race details for the 4.30 WESTRICKS-SCARMA KNOW HOW HANDICAP.

5.00 SCARMA 4-BIRMINGHAM CITY OF THE ROAD AYP MAIDEN

Table containing race details for the 5.00 SCARMA 4-BIRMINGHAM CITY OF THE ROAD AYP MAIDEN.

6.00 BIRMINGHAM CLASSIC

Table containing race details for the 6.00 BIRMINGHAM CLASSIC.

7.35 DOWNHOLLOW CLASSIC

Table containing race details for the 7.35 DOWNHOLLOW CLASSIC.

8.05 BIRMINGHAM RACING CLUB HANDICAP

Table containing race details for the 8.05 BIRMINGHAM RACING CLUB HANDICAP.

8.35 RAMPAGE HANDICAP

Table containing race details for the 8.35 RAMPAGE HANDICAP.

TOP OF THE WIND, trained by Tony O'Neill, is to be aimed at the 540,000 added Newmarket Exhibition Bay Races Nursery — the richest race of its kind in Europe — on August 28 after her victory at Gosforth Park yesterday.

Circles, the first horse they have owned in partnership, secured the Uttoxeter Median Auction Sale.

Michael Bell who had earlier been on the mark with his Chris Thornton failed to achieve a personal milestone — the 500th success of his career. Middleham-based Thornton remains on the 499 mark after Call Me was unable to deliver in the Zanussi Science Limited Stakes.

RACELINE 0930 168+ advertisement with logo and contact information.

Cricket

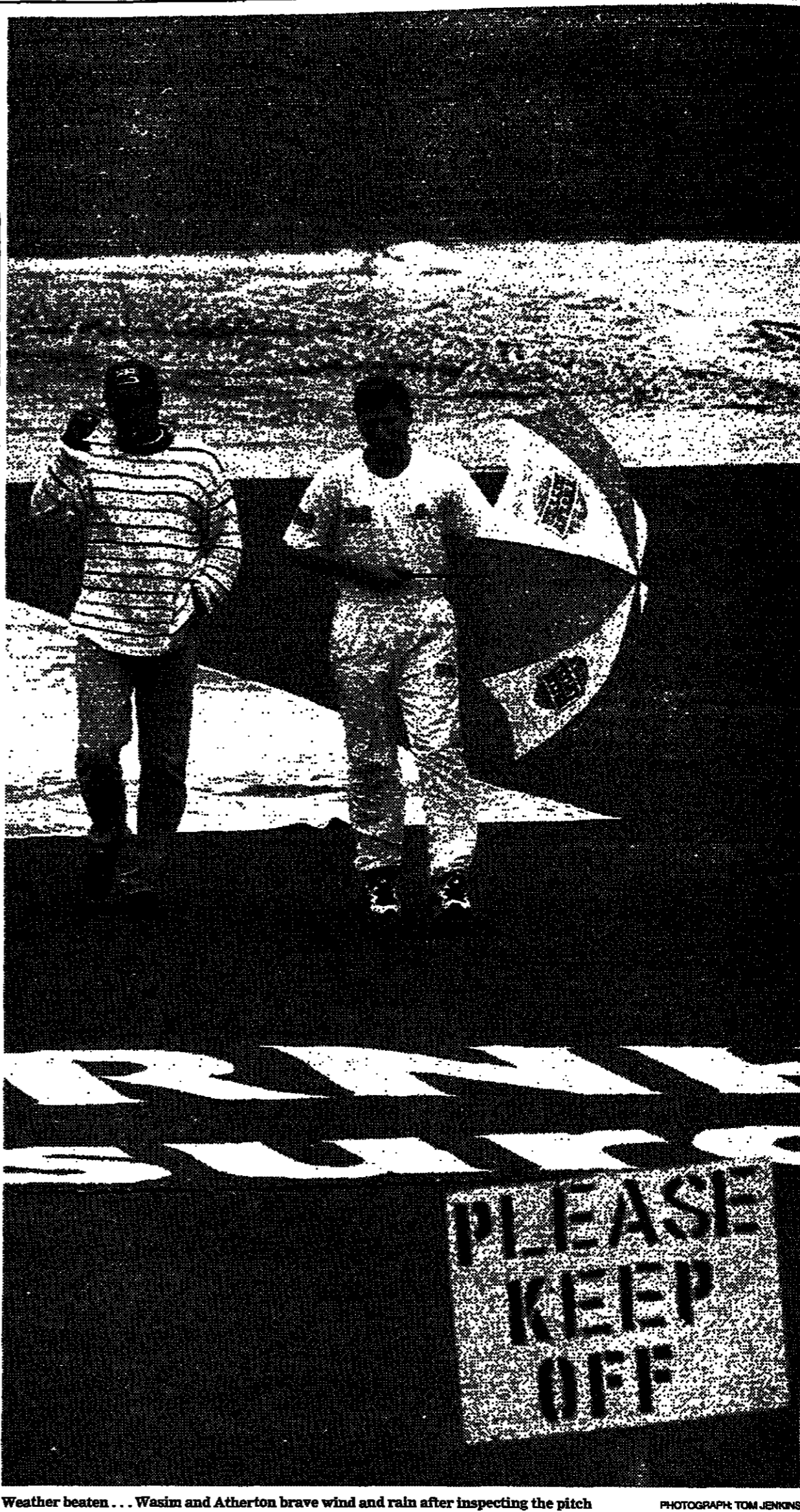
England looking for the fighting spirit of '92

DAVID LLOYD is sufficiently optimistic to believe that if there is life on Mars the chances are it will produce an all-rounder who can reverse-swing the ball and hit a century in half an hour. But, after the drubbing at Lord's, even he must already be wondering whether in time he may be haunted by his expressed belief that in about 1,000 days time England will have been transformed into the mightiest cricket team on this or any other planet. When the chips were down, only the captain and Alec Stewart stood firm. In the second Test, which begins at Headingley today, England have the opportunity to redress the balance, and maintain a hope of doing what no other side has done in England by coming back from a game down to win a three-match series. It will be a gamble but one worth taking.

If Lloyd, a coach who is always searching for inspirational material, needs anything extra for this match then he need look no further than the last time the two sides met at Headingley. In the past 15 years here England have won some, lost some and drawn just the once, but bless them, when they played Pakistan four years ago they won by six wickets inside four days. It is their only win against Pakistan in 17 matches and they did it, against the same Wasim, Waqar and Mushtaq, by the same attention to the basics — crease occupancy and accurate, no-frills bowling — that they will try to employ here on what promises to be a slower rather than capricious seamer. Graham Gooch's superb, dedicated first-innings century was decisive but the balance was tipped by a seam attack — Chris Lewis, Neil Mallender, Derek Ringie and Tim Munton — chosen specifically for the Headingley job. On most other pitches in the world that attack would have been dismissed as toothless and stereotypical. At Leeds, with cloud cover and a sappy, unreliable pitch, it was lethal. Mallender took eight wickets in the match as Pakistan were twice dismissed, for 197 and 221. In the absence of anyone to match this type of attack, the best Pakistan bowling came from Mushtaq,

who took five wickets with his leg-breaks. Wasim, by contrast, took just one in the match, and if Waqar took five wickets in the first innings, they cost him 117 runs, not a fair return at all. England will probably omit Ronnie Irani and Ian Salisbury and, given that they employed seven front-line batsmen in the 1992 match (Graeme Hick batted at seven), today's probable six looks thin by contrast. Stewart, whose foot movement and form appear to have returned, will open with Atherton, resuming what is perceived as a mighty partnership; actually the pair average about 30 compared with over 60 when Atherton partnered Gooch. It is a questionable move, for Stewart came back after the side only after injury to Nick Knight, and if Knight was thought to be the better opener prior to that, little has happened since to alter the view. He is unlikely not to get out of their crease as he did. Against that comes the idea that if Waqar begins to reverse-swing the old ball, another left-hander down the order is no bad thing. Nasser Hussain, who made two centuries against India at No. 3 before breaking his hand, returns to that position. The bowling will be strengthened by the return of Lewis and Andrew Caddick. Lewis had already done much this season to cast off his injury-prone image until he dropped out of the last Test. But, for Caddick, this really is a chance that might not come round again. His tortured shins appear to be functioning properly again, and now he needs to show he can contribute both on and off the field, for there is no doubting that he is as talented a seam bowler as anyone in the team. He, of all four bowlers, could be England's match-winner.

Yesterday, however, Mike Atherton admitted his concern for the continuing well-being of Dominic Cork, whose form has been below his best. "When you see that he's been bowling 21 overs off the reel in the match before a Test, you begin to wonder. But I'm not blaming his captain or the other batsmen, because he can always say no. The trouble is that it is a struggle to get the ball out of his hands. For my part I intend to look after him in Zimbabwe this winter cricket tour. The trouble is not much else." Pakistan have few problems except the continuing wrist injury that Aamir Sohail sustained in the first Test. He is the most accomplished opening batsman in the party and, without his experience, fragility begins to creep in. However, the teenage Shadab Kabir, who opened in the second innings at Lord's, will do so again, and the likelihood is that Asif Mujtaba will come in at three.



Weather beaten... Wasim and Atherton brave wind and rain after inspecting the pitch

Revitalised Waqar serves up meaty food for thought

ENGLAND had attempted a net session in the Yorkshire indoor school yesterday to counteract the threat of Waqar Younis, the only delivery they would have encountered would have been a truckload of pork pies. Planning to cater for the world's most destructive fast bowler has long been less important than catering for the pin-striped world of corporate hospitality. Quite who the food was being prepared for was not immediately obvious, because advance ticket sales have been abysmal, only 35,000 over five days. The court's pork pies, it is to be hoped that England's batsmen are wearing steel toe-caps. England's coach David Lloyd made light of the lack of indoor facilities. "It is August, after all," he said, "the bounce will last time I can remember us having an indoor net at this stage in the season, Alan Gillesden was injured."

Pakistan's captain Wasim Akram was more at ease, wondering how England would have reacted given a similar occurrence in Pakistan. As England spent much of the World Cup grousing about the state of their outdoor nets in Peshawar, it is a wonder he felt the need to ask, "Since Lord's, Lloyd has been besieged by suggestions about how to combat Waqar's late inswing. A crucial element in England's preparations has been to consider whether each individual batsman should shorten his backswing; Graeme Hick, whose backswing was among the most ponderous, has been omitted. Michael Atherton, England's captain, considers the challenge part anticlimactic, part technique. "Half the key is expecting the yorker and accepting that you don't get too many length balls," he said. "I'll make slight technical adjustments when I face him, but they're only slight and I'm not about to reveal what they are. Generally I'm happy with my game."

Another recommendation, made by no less a figure than Sir Garfield Sobers, that England's batsmen should stand a yard out of their crease has been treated more disparagingly. It is one of those strange arguments loved by journalists and village cricketers, but by few people in between. The theory, nevertheless, is topical. It is that Waqar's bowling method, when he achieves reverse swing, invariably results in the ball dipping very late in flight. Forcing him to adjust his length and pitch a yard shorter would allow no opportunity for the inswing to materialise. If he did not adjust his length, he would arrive on the full toss. Lloyd, in any case, was less concerned with a large stride forward than a spot of backtracking. For all his enthusiasm about involving Ian Botham in England's coaching set-up, he emphasised yesterday that any such role was likely to remain imprecise. Lloyd's frustratingly believes that players should be allowed, within financial limitations, to nominate their own personal coaches. That suggests that Botham's involvement at some stage of the Zimbabwe tour, where he will be officiating as a commentator for Sky TV, is guaranteed. Assuming, that is, that his recent libel defeat in the High Court, where not everybody shared his opinions on ball tampering, has not temporarily exhausted his enthusiasm.

Championship: Lancashire v Surrey

Pitch reported after 15 fall

MARTIN BICKNELL is Surrey's only survivor from their last game at the Southampton and Birkdale Cricket Club in 1988, which ended in a draw with scores level. He must have been pleasantly surprised when he returned yesterday to see a pitch with well-grassed patches; after helping Surrey recover from 57 for four to 211, he exploited those patches to take four wickets to reduce Lancashire to 88 for five before a late fightback by Watkinson and Heeg. Bicknell's elder brother Darren had been less impressed when in the seventh over a short ball from Chapple shot along the floor and removed his off stump. Several deliveries also leapt up off a length, as the bruised fingers of Hollis and Speak will testify, and the pitch was automatically reported to Lord's last night by the umpires after 15 wickets fell on the first day. But Lancashire need not worry about a repeat of their 25-point pitch penalty in 1994; the bounce will never be not dangerously so. The pitch has been re-laid since Lancashire's last game here, against Somerset in 1994, and Mike Watkinson looked to his seamers on winning the toss. Austin and Martin in particular did not squander the chance. Martin removed Butcher with a beauty before Bicknell senior suffered Chapple's shoofler, and Austin bowled a spell of 16-3-1-3. His figures were dented by Julian, who pulled a six on the railway track that runs down one side of the ground and added seven fours in his

41. But Austin returned to bowl Martin Bicknell after his battling 23 and complete four for 46. Martin had Natour Shahid lbw for a stumbler 33 and added two tall-end victims at a cost of 58. Surrey were ebullient in the field; after Martin Bicknell's second ball whistled past Steve Titchard, Julian's Australian voice piped up from the gully, "It's your turn to face the music". Bicknell soon had Gaillian caught in the slips and then switched back to face two more wickets with his second and third balls, Titchard dragging a yorker on to his stumps and Fairbrother falling lbw after being struck on the boot plumb in front. Speak later became Bicknell's 49th first-class victim of the season.

Summary table with columns for bowler, overs, maidens, runs, wickets, and economy rate. Includes names like J. D. Brown, M. P. Bicknell, J. E. R. Cochrane, and others.

Soccer Hooligans losing say police

SOCCEr hooliganism is on the wane, according to the police. And, despite dire warnings, Euro 96 turned out to be a remarkably trouble-free tournament. Police figures released yesterday showed a decline in the fourth year running in soccer-related arrests. Whether riot elements have given up their violent ways or are merely plying their trade elsewhere because of improved policing at stadiums is not clear, but the sport can take heart from the decrease in arrests in and around football grounds. Euro 96, which was preceded by an enormous anti-hooligan operation by the police, was characterised by some of the most good-natured crowds seen at football matches in England. According to data published by the Football Unit of the National Criminal Intelligence Service, there were only 1,148 arrests at the eight grounds where the 31 matches of Euro 96 were played, most for drunkenness, ticket touting and disorderly or threatening behaviour. "In spite of the pre-tournament scaremongering, we successfully managed the large numbers of people who attended this tournament," said Malcolm George, Manchester's assistant chief constable and national co-ordinator for policing Euro 96. The police, however, had taken the threat of trouble seriously and mounted an unprecedented pre-emptive strike against known hooligans, many of whom had been picked out from video film of incidents at earlier matches. Intelligence was also swapped with other police forces and potential troublemakers were weeded out. So successful were the police in preventing trouble that there was not one major incident at a football ground during Euro 96 and the only serious violence came after Germany beat England in a penalty shoot-out in a semi-final. Then England supporters, most of whom had watched the game on television in pubs, ran amok in central London attacking police and motorists. The same night an unfortunate Russian student was mistaken for a German and stabbed almost fatally in Sussex. The steady drop in arrests at English league games also continued, with 3,437 during the 1995-96 season inside and outside grounds, 10 per cent down on the previous season and the fourth drop in a row. More dramatic is the drop in arrests at cup matches, with only 897 at FA Cup, League Cup and Auto Windscreen Cup games, a drop of 28 per cent. In all, soccer-related arrests were down 15 per cent while attendances were up one per cent.

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Elliott set for Blackburn but Klinsmann has no intention of replacing Shearer

THE transfer tunnel between Blackburn Rovers and Newcastle United is expected to reopen today with Robbie Elliott moving from the North-east to north Lancashire. The England Under-21 international seems likely to join Rovers in the week after Alan Shearer headed in the opposite direction. With Shearer's £15 million fee burning a hole in Ray Harford's pocket, the Blackburn manager has apparently agreed to pay about £3 million for Elliott, who has been on a weekly contract at Newcastle since the end of last season. Jürgen Klinsmann said yesterday that he did not wish to fill the void created in Harford's side by Shearer's departure. Rumours of his imminent arrival for a supposed £300,000 a week had temporarily lifted spirits at Ewood Park but Germany's captain said he would stay with Bayern Munich. Years that Manchester United's Roy Keane would miss the opening of the season because of injury were allayed yesterday. Keane damaged a knee during last weekend's Umbro Tournament but a scan has revealed only minor muscle damage. He will probably play in Sunday's Charity Shield against Newcastle. Shearer, who was expected to make his Newcastle debut then, will play first in tomorrow's friendly at Lincoln. Manchester City have run into problems in their attempt to sign the Australian international Damian Mori because they wish to pay by instalments. A fee of £300,000 for the Adelaide City striker has been agreed. If the matter is resolved quickly, Mori could arrive at Maine Road as Niall Quinn departs; Sunderland yesterday offered £1 million for Quinn despite the asking price of £1.3 million.

Neville Southall now seems destined to extend by another season his career at Everton. Despite the arrival of the England Under-21 international Paul Gerrard from Oldham last week, Southall has been reassured that he will play first-team football. On Tuesday he discussed a free transfer to Wolves. At the present rate of striking he is more likely to get a game in the Premiership. Brian Marwood, the Professional Footballers' Association commercial executive, has warned again that members will "exercise their right to take industrial action" unless Football League chairmen keep to an agreement on Sky television money. The former Monaco coach Arsene Wenger says he will decide by the end of the month whether to accept the offer to become the Football Association's technical director. He is currently coaching Nagoya Grampus Eight.

Rugby Union Tuigamala to follow Offiah lead

THE Wigan centre Va'anga Tuigamala is the latest top rugby league player to set his sights on doubling up with union. Tuigamala, who deserted union after the All Blacks' tour of England and Scotland in 1993, is considering several offers to play across the codes. Wasps' first-team manager Malcolm Sinclair said yesterday: "Like all the leading clubs we have spoken to many available players. Tuigamala has been among them, but he has been contacted by other clubs at the top of the Coun-

Sport in brief

Cricket Australia's former Test off-spinner Tim May has announced his retirement. The 24-year-old, who took 75 wickets in 24 Tests, is to concentrate on his business interests. Golf Laura Davies, who won last weekend's du Maurier Classic in Canada, has regained her position as the world No. 1 from Sweden's Annika Sorenstam on the Ping Leader Board. Chess The defending champion Matthew Sadler is among five joint leaders after two rounds of the British championship at Nottingham, writes Leonard Barden. The 22-year-old grandmaster from Chatham was lucky when his opponent Chris Duncan, a pawn down but with growing chances, overstepped the time limit while making his final move before the clock control. Sadler's prospects brightened further when the No. 2 and No. 3 seeds, Mark Hebden and John Emms, were held to draws. Equestrianism Ireland's Harry Marshall with Velveto won a 14-hour jump-off yesterday to take the Kerrygold Welcome Stakes, the opening event of the Dublin Horse Show. Michael Wintaker, a member of Britain's unsuccessful Olympic squad, took Elton through to the jump-off but had a fence down and finished eighth. Though Nick Skelton, another Atlanta competitor, was impressive in the Speed Class on Quick Star he was not fast enough to catch Michel Robert of France on Alligator Fontaine. Tennis Jeremy Bates, the 35-year-old former British No. 1 who announced his retirement during Wimbledon, takes up a coaching position with the Lawn Tennis Association next week. In Southsea the world junior No. 1, Martin Lee from Sussex, reached his first senior quarter-final when he defeated Mike Wyeth of Surrey 6-1, 4-6, 6-1 at the LTA Summer Satellite yesterday. He now plays Damian Roberts of South Africa. Motor Racing Finland's Mika Salo, 12th in the world drivers' championship, will remain with Tyrrell next year for a third season. Rowing Britain's three senior crews went through repechages to reach tomorrow's semi-finals of the world championships of Strathclyde Park. In the single sculls Chris Long finished second to Estonia's Roman Lutostkin and Susan Appleboom qualified for a chance to take on the 1993 champion, Romania's Constanta Bucurei. The new lightweight pairing of Jason Keys and James Brown reached the semi-finals with ease.

Advertisement for Harrington and Harris, featuring a man's face and the text 'Harrington and Harris' and 'Careless Rused... message from Co...'. The ad is partially cut off on the right edge of the page.

Handwritten Arabic text at the bottom center of the page.

SportsGuardian

European Cup: Qualifying round
First leg: Rangers 3, Alania Vladikavkaz 1

McCoist revives Rangers

Patrick Glenn

RANGERS' third goal header by Gordon McInnes' cross — climaxed an extraordinary comeback by the Scottish champions against Russians who had seemed totally in control at half-time.

Walter Smith's pre-match observation that Rangers, even at home, would have to defend well against clever, quick and perceptive opponents had begun to look like clairvoyance long before the Russians took the lead after 28 minutes. Compact and knowledgeable at the back, authoritative and incisive in the forward areas, the Alania players frequently looked capable of taking advantage of their edge in match practice.

Indeed, they would have led earlier but for Goram's fine save, leaving left to prevent Agave's chip from squeezing in at the post after the latter had combined well with Kasiyov and wrong-footed the Ibrox defence with a twinkle-toed turn.

Perhaps the most telling difference between the sides was the versatility of the Russians. They could not be compartmentalised, each one capable of filling in capably anywhere. Agave, nominated a defender, typified this with the move that had tested Goram.

The opening goal, therefore,

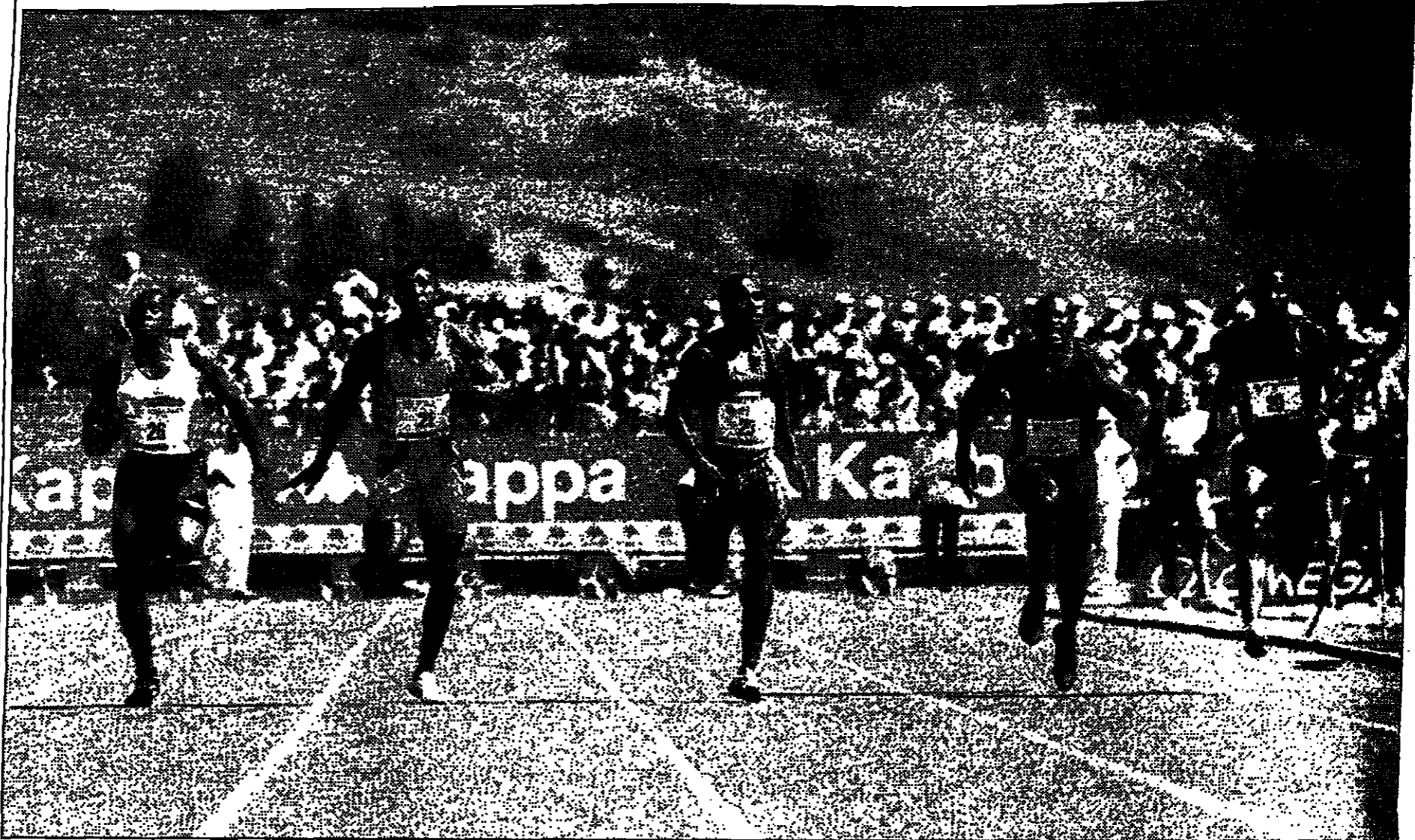
was no surprise, though there seemed little threat as Pagaev was fed wide on the left. But suddenly he burst past Cleland and pulled the ball back 20 yards towards Yanovsky. The big midfielder, who had virtually orchestrated the Russian momentum, moved forward and sent a low left-foot shot into the far corner of Goram's net from just outside the penalty box.

Rangers, however, deserve great credit for the spirit which they came back in the second half. They disturbed the rhythm of their visitors not only with strength and commitment but with some fancy football, too.

It produced an equaliser in the 51st minute. McCoist and Laudrup had already combined to bring a good save from Kramarenko when McCall's cross from the left was met by Albertz, whose header was knocked off the line by Kornienko. But McInnes, who had replaced Ferguson in the 20th minute, drove the loose ball in past a clutter of bodies.

McCoist, who had been given a severe time by the home fans for two misplaced first-half headers, gave Rangers the lead nine minutes later. Durie, fighting hard to retain possession on the right, delivered a knee-high centre and McCoist got in front of his marker and right-footed it away to the right of Kramarenko from 12 yards. It was his first European goal for almost four years.

CHRISTIE BEATEN AGAIN



Faceseeters... the white-vested Bruny Surin of Canada on his way to victory over Linford Christie, second left, in the 100m at Sestriere.

PHOTOGRAPH: CLIVE MARSON

Hammers under fire over share policy

Neil Robinson

WEST Ham United, who revel in their image as the arch-stygal family football club, are facing a revolt among ordinary shareholders nine days before the start of the season.

The row has been sparked by the board's decision to call an emergency general meeting this month at which it will recommend that shares are traded only in blocks of 100 or above. The proposal is designed to prevent an increase in the shareholding base, which has spiralled over recent years when ordi-

nary supporters have bought small holdings in the club.

With West Ham shares reported to be changing hands at £200 this week, a fan determined to obtain a stake under the new rules would have to pay £20,000 for 100 shares. "It's an absolute disgrace," said Shane Barber, a lifelong fan who owns one share and runs the magazine *On A Mission*.

"The worst thing is that they call themselves a family club and then do this, which is designed to exclude the small shareholder. We're just a bloody inconvenience."

"We only found out about this last week when we received a letter. I'm writing to every shareholder to vote against this. I've spoken to lots of other shareholders and they are equally outraged."

He said there was a general tendency within the game for the average supporter to be marginalised. Under the scheme anyone wishing to unload less than 100 shares would have to sell them en bloc to a single new owner.

The proposal is expected to be ratified at the meeting on August 22 because the board controls 90 per cent of the shares.

West Ham, who have spent more than £3 million on players this summer, claim that the proposal will save on administrative costs. At least 146 supporters own a single share entitling them to a copy of the annual report. However, Barber dismisses this argument. "We're talking peanuts. They say it is to save money, but what is the cost? 146 second-class stamps."

He also criticised the timing of the meeting, at 2pm. "Normally they hold the agm in the evening but this is the middle of the working day. It will keep people away. In the past you used to get about 12 people turning up for the agm; now you have about 75 people with a really keen interest asking pertinent questions."

Neither West Ham's chairman Terence Brown nor the chief executive Peter Storrie was available to comment yesterday.

'It's hard to work out if we are boon or burden to the club'

Mark Miller

"I've owned it for more than a quarter of a century. I have no idea what it is worth, it hasn't paid a dividend in donkey's years, and I am not sure if I could find it without turning the house upside-down. Yet I would not part with it for love or money. One share in Burnley Football Club."

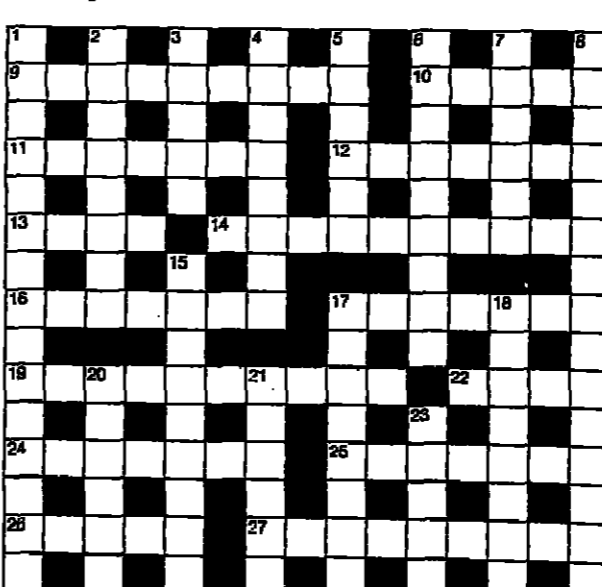
Burnley has about 1,000 shareholders. Many, like me, have just a handful of shares or less. It is hard to work out whether, for the club, we are a boon or a burden. Certainly we are a cost. Each of us, however tiny our shareholding, is entitled to attend the annual meeting and to receive the report and accounts. Printing and postage mount up. One shareholder lives in Spain; would he attend the agm? I haven't been to it that often myself. Not since the one in Burnley Central Library in the mid 1970s, amid sufficient reports of shareholder dissent to attract the interest of the television cameras.

Club shares don't change hands that often; I inherited mine. We may be in the Second Division and we may not have a stock market quotation but I still regard the share as an heirloom. My elder nephew has ruled himself out of the inheritance by supporting Everton.

Maybe it is just sentiment; a reminder of when we used to get to Wembley or when Zurich Grasshoppers played under the Turf Moor floodlights. Or maybe it's just that, despite the changed fortunes, I will be at Luton on August 17 full of hope. Anyway, I'm not selling.

Guardian Crossword No 20,726

Set by Rufus

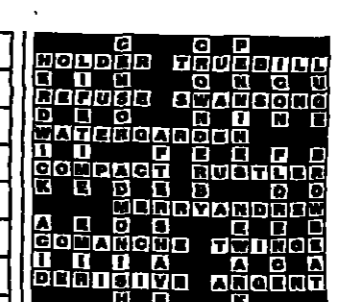


Across

- 9 Turned out awkward without an instructor (9)
- 10 Public minister about to return? Quite the opposite (5)
- 11 Fundamental shifting in cargo (7)
- 12 One who helps another to a seat (7)
- 13 His victims lose heart (4)
- 14 Worker in biblical community went to America (5,5)
- 16 Tentative suggestions put out by some animals? (7)
- 17 Tom's nag is mixed in with others (7)
- 19 Make too many accusations of commercial malpractice (10)
- 22 One gentle about to become a Hindu ascetic (4)
- 24 All waiting — to be signed? (5,2)

Down

- 1 Take firm action to speed things up (3,4,4,4)
- 2 First phase of the Stone Age (5,3)
- 3 United to make reparation (2,3)
- 4 Form of drawing (3,5)
- 5 Coming into season (6)
- 6 Holiday with one's bride, darling Cynthial (9)
- 7 He gets the game off to a flying start (6)
- 8 Figure in matrimonial disputes (7,8)
- 15 Bent on making money from an upturn in allie? (9)
- 25 Goes ahead when the dogs are ready for a walk (5,2)
- 26 A more sensible arrangement of wires (5)
- 27 Down the line from Lancaster (9)



CROSSWORD SOLUTION 20,726

- 17 Very good article for cake decoration (8)
- 18 Boy admits disappearance of pocket dictionary (8)
- 20 Pass directions around the circuit (6)
- 21 Call for superior judgment (6)
- 23 Female subject of a popular song-cycle (6)

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REAL ESTATE

Banks in France are being terrorised by a cunning vegetable. The vegetable has four sharp blades behind his back and looks set to battle both police and workers for some time. When one bank manager asked, "Are you serious?" the vegetable shouted, "No, I'm an asparagus and let loose several rounds into the ceiling."

A FAIRER COP

Police in Milan have discovered that the fifth off the wheel is harder than you might think. One night a tall, high-browed blonde aroused more than suspicion but caused a real stir when 'she' was arrested and discovered to be their police chief in disguise.

PLAYING BY THEIR OWN RULES

You might call Jack Nicholson self-satisfied in a charming kind of way, quite capable of uttering deeply un-PC words about gender — "Men's glands programme them to get up after sex and go right on to the next one."

Derek Malcolm

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